







# **As Others See Us**

EDITED BY JOSEPH JACOBS

## **I**

### **THE ENGLAND OF TO-DAY**



## AS OTHERS SEE US'

THE opinion of foreign contemporaries is said to be a foretaste of posthumous fame in the case of men. But with a nation foreign opinion is the only kind of reputation it can enjoy. Its own self-praise is no recommendation to other people; quite otherwise. If, then, we want to know how England stands in the eyes of the world, we can obviously only do so by looking through foreign spectacles. What a man's neighbours think of him forms the moral atmosphere of his life. Nor can he fail practically, if not explicitly, to learn how he is looked upon by his neighbours at almost every stage of his existence. But with nations it is different; they live a self-centred life. Only when the war-dogs are straining at the leash do they need to trouble themselves about what other nations think of them. Now it is just in the peaceful interludes that the misconceptions arise which lead to the horrors of war. England has only recently learnt how she is regarded abroad, and the revelation was a startling one. Her very ignorance was her danger.

Here, then, was an opportunity for doing a work

of even national importance. There was danger in England's ignorance of the light in which other nations view her. Let us remove that ignorance, and one source of danger at least will disappear: that is the idea of the present series. It is to consist of recent books written by competent continental visitors to our shores: from them at least we may learn to see ourselves as others see us.

It will easily be understood that books like these will contain many errors of detail, many misconceptions of the English national character, but therein lies their value. It is by allowing for these misconceptions that we can understand, explain, and pardon. Englishmen have certain ideas of themselves, of their own character, which at many points will be found to conflict strongly with the idea formed abroad. The contrast is often as great as that between Mr. Punch's picture of John Bull and the comic Englishman of the continental caricaturist. But that very example may remind us that our conception of the English character may be as far removed from the truth as any foreign one. Who ever saw *Punch's* John Bull walking on English soil now-a-days?

\*For these reasons no attempt has been made to point out errors in the books of this series. It is just these that are instructive. But one can learn but little from the mistakes of the ignorant. Great care has been taken that the observers whose reports we give in an English dress shall be competent. Endeavour will be made to prevent

a further source of error slipping in during the process of translation, but for this the individual translators are responsible.

From what countries shall we select our continental critics? The larger the nation now-a-days, the more closely the type and ideal of national character approximates to a common form. It is probable, therefore, that we shall get less misconception, and therefore less instruction—and amusement—from French or German books on England than from the natives of other countries. The smaller nations, too, have less conscious rivalry with England, and are likely to report more impartially. Search has been made among them, and early volumes of the series will contain reports of Portuguese and Swedish sojourners among them. But French and German opinion will not be excluded, and it may be hoped that from half-a-dozen volumes an adequate idea will be obtained of what Europe thinks of England.

What applies to the national life in general has almost equal application to special departments of it. From time to time monographs appear by skilled continental critics contrasting their own with our system of education, of land tenure, of taxation, and even of art, for the Continent is just waking up to the fact that there is such a thing as English Art. Here we cannot hope for instruction from the unconscious errors of the foreign reporter, for in this direction we need expert opinion only. In particular, the science of warfare is far more

highly organised on the Continent than in this country, and German and French criticism of our military, and even of our naval, system may be of exceptional interest and utility.

But the pen has now-a-days a double function for our instruction : it can write and it can draw. A few touches of black and white can often convey as much meaning—and as much misconception—as a whole chapter. It is hoped to include in this series a volume containing foreign caricatures of English life and contemporary history, which will not form the least amusing contribution from which we can learn how others see us.

It is possible that the present century will be the last in the world's history during which national types will remain distinct, at least so far as the more highly developed nationalities are concerned. Closer communication corrupts national peculiarities. Already national dress has practically disappeared in Western Europe, and what has happened with head-gear will soon follow with what it covers. Whether this process is for good or ill who shall say? but it is an inevitable one under the present system of commercialism. Still, the process is not yet complete, and meanwhile we have a final opportunity of seeing ourselves as others see us.

JOSEPH JACOBS.



THE  
ENGLAND OF TO-DAY

FROM THE PORTUGUESE OF  
OLIVEIRA MARTINS

TRANSLATED BY  
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## PREFATORY NOTE

THE following pages are a translation of the Portuguese work *A Inglaterra de Hoje* of Oliveira Martins, which was published at Lisbon in 1893, and contains an account of a visit paid by the author to England in the preceding summer.





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# THE ENGLAND OF TO-DAY

(LETTERS OF A TRAVELLER)

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## I

### SOUTHAMPTON—THE LANDSCAPE

IT was dawn when the *Magdalena*, close to the Needles, entered the Solent, and leaving the Isle of Wight on the right, entered the Southampton Water in the opposite direction.

It was dawn, and we anchored, waiting for the tide to enter the dock. In every direction there appeared on the same level a little forest of masts, yards, and ropes, imperfectly visible in the morning mist. The water was a mirror of steel. On both sides the banks of the river disclosed themselves, flat and thickly wooded. On the right was the magnificent Naval Hospital, and along the shore here and there, in a setting of verdure, appeared houses looking on to the water, where steam-launches and yachts under sail rapidly left their traces, drawn in straight lines like the marks of a diamond on glass.

Now the sun came forth to announce a "glorious day," as the English say, when the steamer majestically and slowly continued her course. We made fast to the wharf with the assistance of a tug, and leapt ashore into the custom-house shed, along the other side of which was marshalled the train ready to convey us to London. Luggage was examined in the midst of an insufferable confusion, that affords some tolerable amount of testimony in the opposite direction to that which is called "the practical genius" of the English; we entered the carriage, and the train rolled on. In a few minutes we had got to the edge of the town, now crossing a street on its own level, now passing through a tunnel under another, now over a viaduct on a level with the roofs of the houses, among a confusion of signals and a tangle of wires, and the gloom and commotion peculiar to the neighbourhood of railway stations, especially in England.

The day, however, turned out glorious. The sky was made of turquoise; the air, saturated with exhalations from the sea, was invigorating; and now the railway made its road among live hedges, and gradually unrolled the landscape on both sides in a green sea of vegetation.

Were we in the country? No. From Southampton to London the railway seems a street almost. One passes towns and villages—Bishopstoke, Winchester, Alresford, Alton, Bentley, Farnham, Ash, Weybridge, Esher, and many more,

greater or smaller, emerging from the midst of the trees, like ant-hills or bee-hives, masses of red building with earthenware roofs, gabled and tiled, from which the sun is reflected as from metal.

*Metallic* is indeed the tone of the green that the full sunlight makes excessively crude. Metallic and monotonous, always the same, without the gradual shades of Southern landscape. There is no ground without its turf, and upon the turf there are inevitably heavy oxen, sheep, and cows with distended udders. It is the paradise of flesh. One begins to perceive the British temperament.

In order to conquer the monotony inseparable from sea-voyages, I provided myself with a small library in English. I wished to get correct notions and accurate information, that I might link them with the fugitive impressions of travel.

One of the books that I read was the *Rural Exodus*, by Anderson Graham; and now that I saw the English country unrolled before me there came to aid my memory the observations made, the facts registered, and the notes collected on the two capital heads of rural England, namely, the emigration to the towns, and the transformation of husbandry.

All the agriculturists, driven by the covetousness of both clergy and laity, endeavour to turn their industry into some direction which may make it less costly to them. Cattle, sheep, and horses require a smaller amount of human labour than

ploughing, sowing, and reaping. The principal phenomenon of the latest agricultural revolutions is, therefore, the enormous increase of pasture-land. England is to-day repeating that which happened in Italy after the conquest of Carthage, whose dominions—Sardinia, Sicily, Africa, and Spain—came to be the granaries of Rome. There are transformed wholesale a hundred thousand acres yearly from cultivation into pasture. Every year the bovine population is augmented by more than a million head. Rural wages, therefore, do not increase; on the other hand, they more easily diminish, and thus one of the causes of the depopulation of the country finds itself aggravated by the very conditions of agricultural industry.

The wide undulations of the landscape unfold themselves in carpets of dainty turf, in fields of beet-root, clover, and grass, an immense table laid out for animals to eat from. One can imagine the dampness of the earth below; one just gets a passing glimpse of the canal conveying its clayey water. The air, in spite of the blue sky, feels impregnated with water. Rolling along in the distance near the horizon come flocks of clouds, a congestion of the air, a curtain of shade descending upon the earth. Then comes on a moderate rain, like water sifted through a sieve, to irrigate and sustain the ever-green grass. The country is a rank forage manufactory, the entrance to a dairy or a slaughter-house.

In the whole of the United Kingdom—England, Wales, Scotland, and Ireland—the area under cultivation is now forty-eight million acres, and twenty years ago it was forty-five millions. Pasture-land, natural and artificial, amounted to twenty-seven millions, or sixty per cent., and land for cereals to eleven millions, or about twenty-five per cent. Now the pasture-land is thirty-three millions, or seventy per cent., and cereals nine millions, or less than twenty per cent. In England and Wales, among twenty millions of cultivated acres, eighteen are for pasture, seven for cereals, and three for vegetables and garden produce generally. In Scotland the pasture-land consists of three millions of acres out of a total of five millions under cultivation. In Ireland there are twelve out of a total of fifteen. Is or is not Great Britain a great meat factory and a paradise of flesh?

The calculations made by the agent of the Earl of Carlisle, Mr. R. E. Turnbull, in a paper I happened to see in London, gave in 1890, among an agricultural production of a total of a hundred and eighty-six million pounds sterling, about sixty-eight per cent., or a hundred and twenty-five millions, for animals and matters yielded by them. Cereals on the one hand, and vegetables on the other, counted equally for thirty millions. In respective profit the percentage attaching to cattle is still higher; it touches seventy per cent.

The carpets of grass, densely peopled with



edible ruminants, present themselves to us through the carriage windows as we go swiftly along, dotted with yellow and white flowers, like topazes and pearls set in a sea of emerald, in which the suspended rain-drops, catching the light, seem like diamonds. So much jewellery, glistening so cruelly, fatigues the sight. The live hedges mark out in rectangles the whole extent of land, which has lost the character of *country* irregular and spontaneous, in order to acquire that of a factory of its own peculiar sort. The trees, scattered in copses or rows, in the uniformity of their colour, in the grave regularity of their opulent shapes, appear also artificial to eyes accustomed to landscape as living and full of contrasts as that of the South. It might be said that Nature has here reserved all her caprices for the soul, and that she has therefore given it a scenery so monotonous, contradictory and enigmatical sphinx as she is.

To meadows succeed parks, and to parks meadows. The railway goes along among fields, palaces, gardens, and villas, the interminable suburbs of the metropolis, a city towards which one always goes *up*. "Going up to London" is a consecrated English phrase. From the masses of trees, repeated in successive planes till the horizon is shut out, a diffused light escapes. The chestnut trees in flower, the elms, the sycamores, the dark and slender cypresses—all these trees, imposingly heavy, here and there intermingled with thin plane

trees or shady oaks ; but without the curtains waving in the air of poplars that border our rivulets, where the nightingale builds her nests, without the tone and varied colour of Continental vegetation, these appear to me, like the heavy cows, to be there for a practical end, ignoring the careless joyousness of our native vegetation.

A bluish mist, pregnant with light, surrounded the meadows plastered with green ; and as green at a distance grows darker, so the mist went on increasing in density, involving all beyond the dark borders of the landscape palpitating with life. I vaguely felt what I may call an hallucination of meat, and understood how the English are a people of athletes.

## II

### LEAVING THE COUNTRY—ARRIVAL IN LONDON

MEANWHILE the train was running along through a sea of enclosures and parks of palaces enchased in verdure, with gardens descending in plots to the edges of the road, dotted with masses of rhododendrons, three times a man's height, shrubs with red or violet flowers, disentangling themselves from a strong and warm mass of dark green foliage. There were elegant cottages, little castles pretentiously adorned with battlements and turrets, with steeples and spires, some imitating ancient mansions, and others cardboard toys. One felt *money* irrigating in all this scene, of which the fertile humidity caused *meat* to be had from the very bosom of the earth. The more humble azaleas were enclosed in beds by the side of the rhododendrons, dotting ~~also~~ with amethysts or rubies the field of green enamel. All this gave me an impression of Africa. Was I not by some chance on the road to Carthage? The semi-barbaric luxury of human things, the violence of colours of the metallic landscape, the impression of strength, the sentiment of a crudeness

foreign to all delicacy and æsthetic sensibility, were just the very sentiments that came to my mind, probably because of the ideas with which I came ; and because these things and these colours, created in the dark and fog of long winters and under skies of the colour of tin, are not capable of sustaining the full light of a clear sun.

The train, still journeying, seemed to me to go along drawn by the focus of attraction of the capital, London, of which all this part of England is a suburb. The devouring inspiration exercised by the capital was the phenomenon that pre-occupied me, and of which the surrounding scenery gave me a proof that corroborated by observation what I had acquired by previous study.

"Only boys, girls, and old folk are left," is the universal cry of the agriculturists. The able-bodied people all go. They reckon that to-day there are in England not more than eighty thousand rural labourers. The population of England and Wales rose during the last thirty years from twenty to twenty-nine millions of inhabitants. In 1861 they were twenty, and 1871 nearly twenty-two, in 1881 nearly twenty-six, and in 1891 they were twenty-nine millions. So far so good ; among these numbers the rural people amounted to under eight millions in 1861, and are over eight in 1891. The proportion of rural inhabitants, who were at the beginning of this period thirty-five per cent., came down at the end of it to twenty-eight. The last

census shows that, of 1995 districts outside the metropolis, 945 — one-half — show an absolute diminution of population. These are the farm lands.

If wages are low, as in Wiltshire, the country people leave ; if they are high, as in Northumberland, they leave just the same. If the farms are small, as near Sleaford, they leave ; if they are large, as generally in Norfolk, they leave also. When the railways began to penetrate into rural districts the hopes of the people were magnificent. They hoped that the stagnant markets of the small towns would awake to new life and prosperity. Yet the railways helped the congestion of the towns, the depopulation of the country, the concentration of riches, and the commercial tone of life ; and agriculture continued to decline steadily.

Concurrently with these facts, ownership continued concentrating itself. In 1891 the total area of rural properties in the United Kingdom was seventy-five million acres ; of these fifty-two millions were in farms of more than a thousand acres, fifteen millions in farms of more than a hundred, five millions in farms of more than one, and only a hundred and eighty-eight thousand acres in farms of less than one acre. It is right to mention that a single owner may possess several farms. In 1890 the inheritances in landed property of a value superior to half-a-million sterling were eleven in a total of eight millions,

and those superior to a million were four in a total of six millions. The reaction against the accumulation of property did not appear to yield any result. *Latifundia perdidit Italiam*, said Pliny; and that which happened in ancient Italy is repeating itself in modern England. The philanthropic and patriotic experiments of Mr. Chaplin in Lincolnshire do not appear to have been able to stem the current; Lord Salisbury said so in his speech at Exeter in February 1893: "I do not think small ownership and farming are the most economical means of cultivating the land." It is true that he added: "Small proprietorship constitutes the most efficacious barrier to revolution." There does not exist, as on the neighbouring continent, principally in France, a small *bourgeoisie* of property owners and tradespeople, which acts as a social equator. There are exuberant riches; and that which tends to make the rich become richer places them more face to face with the poorer classes, a dangerous state of things.

The parish of Doddington was an aggregation of small properties, like so many in many English counties, in Lincolnshire, in Wiltshire, in Cheshire, in Norfolk, etc. The tragedy of the small freeholder is represented here in the same manner as in all the corners of England—a tragedy of frightful toil and privations, of heartrending poverty, of indebtedness and executions, of bank-

ruptcies and deaths. Another parish, that of Ford, which belonged almost entirely to the Marquis of Waterford, was, under the rule of the late Marchioness, one of the most benevolently-managed places. For many generations the custom existed of giving to the villagers the allotment of an acre, or of half-an-acre, or a quarter, with each cottage; but the great majority of these people left for Newcastle, preferring to work on the railways and wharves, or to be shopmen or behind the bar. In 1881 to 1891, in ten years, Newcastle went up from a hundred and forty-five to a hundred and eighty-six thousand inhabitants—twenty-eight per cent. This exodus of the rural population is one of the causes of the ruin of agriculture.

The landlords have hard work to let the lands. In the autumn of 1892 it was possible in Norfolk to go fifteen miles without encountering a tenanted property. The proof of this crisis lies in the extremely low price of land, and in the excessive number of rural houses shut up because their masters no longer possess the means of living in them in the old style, and it lies in the superficial area that is out of cultivation. In order to escape the situation in Ireland, boycotting by the people, the landlords voluntarily lower the rents, in some cases even down to one-half. In various districts, for instance in Essex and Lincolnshire, they are giving up all their land. The steward of the Earl

of Carlisle, of whom I have just spoken, reckons a hundred and eighty-six millions sterling annually of raw product of farm labour in England and Wales, yielding £3 17s. 6d. an acre. After allowing for every kind of expenditure, there remain thirteen shillings nett profit for the tenant, namely a rate of more than ten per cent.; but the landlord, receiving fourteen shillings, does not make more than two and two-thirds per cent. after paying taxes, repairs, etc. Putting together the rent to landlord and the profit made by the tenant, the land will yield three and three-fifths per cent. It ought, however, to be stated that these are the calculations of a landlord.

Two instructive examples I heard spoken of consist in the property of Oriel College, Oxford, described in an interesting memorandum presented to the Royal Statistical Society, and in the property of Guy's Hospital. The first in 1877 measured 6068 acres, with a rental of £10,472; in 1890 they measured 6142 acres at a rental of £7689. The others came down from £41,840 in 1835 to £27,550 in 1891.

• Importation from abroad helps the rural exodus to bring on the crisis of agriculture. I heard everybody complaining of this, and applauding French rural protection. Five-and-twenty years ago wheat was worth fifty shillings a quarter, to-day it is thirty-one. Butter and cheese came down twenty per cent. in twenty years. Eggs



come from all parts. The employment of ice for the preservation of perishable substances enlarges the working sphere of the business. Cheese, butter, margarine, eggs—of which in 1870 there were imported a value of eleven millions sterling—now enter at the rate of twenty-two millions; just double, and more if you consider the reduction in price. In 1891 more than one hundred and sixty-six millions sterling of farm produce came in from abroad.

Now the truth is that England, a town and a factory, an office and a workshop, signifies much more than England as a farm; and therefore this ruin of agricultural labour in favour of the town and manufacturing populations constitutes a profit in the national balance-sheet. The countries in which agriculture is the predominant industry, and wealth are a case apart.

Mr. James Macdonald, of the *Farming World*, whose book, *The Book of the Farm*, appeared last year in a new edition, thus formulates the earnings of a ploughman in Essex—

			£	s.	d.
52 weeks at 14 shillings	...	...	36	8	0
Extra for haymaking	...	...	1	10	0
" " harvesting	...	...	3	10	0
Cottage	...	...	5	0	0
Fire-wood, etc.	...	...	1	2	0
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This is the wage of the better ones. Ordinary labourers get a shilling less per week. Near

London wages rise two or three shillings, but, on the other hand, in the more distant counties they go down to ten, eleven, or twelve shillings. Mr. Kebble, the well-known Tory journalist, in his book *English Country Life*, also published in 1891, says that in general terms the annual income of an ordinary English day labourer, including wages and perquisites, ranges between £50 in Northumberland and a little over £30 in Wiltshire and other southern counties. The medium is £40, but it is only the exceptional lowness of a few counties that brings this about. In the eastern and midland counties, and in those of the north and south-east, it is more usual to see the total rise as high as £43 or £44, than to go down as low as £37 or £38. Shepherds, carmen, and servants are paid a better wage,—at the rate of £50 per annum. The enormous differences observed from county to county require some discretion in the matter of the general exactness of statistics. There is some reason for mistrusting averages: there is more to be expected from local information. They tell me that there are decent cottages in Gloucestershire of tenants who do not get more than **twelve** shillings a week, and that on this they have to feed and clothe a whole family. How they manage to avoid dying of hunger is a mystery. Norfolk and Suffolk are to all appearances at the present moment the counties worst off in so far as concerns the lot of their labourers.

Hampshire and Surrey, which I crossed in my journey to London, showed me frequently on the roadside little cottages covered with thatch or tiles, low, with little closed windows, allowing a poor interior to be seen through the open door. But all was so clean and in such order! The glass transparent and clear as water; no broken tiles, no torn curtains, no puddle, no litter scattered about; and domestic animals kept in pens. They tell me that the uncleanliness of the South would be deadly in these climates. In the garden there are flowers, and the creepers grow on the walls of the house, enclosing it in a nest of verdure. On the plot of land, at the door, I see an old man seated in the sun; at his side a daughter is reading—it appears to me she is reading to him—what? Perhaps one of the innumerable articles commenting on the ruin of the country, and the extinguished happiness of old England, merry England!

Frequent are the lectures and speeches made, and the articles written, on the decadence of agriculture. The theme is identically the same; the ideas of reform vary little. They always begin with the lowness of wages, insinuating that the toilers are reduced to hunger in order, that the tenant farmer may be able to trot by in his gig, and that the landlord may ride in his carriage. This rhetorical preamble puts the reader or the listener in the right humour. Then come forth the alterations produced by time, the increase of

rents, the modifications in allotments. Following on this is advocated the creation of parish councils as owners of the land, letting them to the labourers on terms incontrovertibly reasonable. Formerly opinion was nailed down to the nationalisation scheme of Henry George ; which, however, yielded to the new idea of parish councils and rural collectivism. The indispensable condition would be to sweep away the general lethargy, the labourers uniting together and fortifying themselves by association. Only strikes are worth anything, and that only of partial value ; the action of Parliament is valueless, and not worth consideration.

This propaganda spreads itself actively in the country, and inclines it towards Radicalism. The only exceptions are the districts which escape the agricultural depression, or which have as their representatives the members of some family specially popular. In general, both landlords and tenants are convinced that the actual condition of rural districts is due almost exclusively to the policy of free trade, and that the only plan of salvation consists in the re-establishment of protective duties. But the worker in the field, the day labourer, does not think the same. He does not suffer by foreign competition palpably and directly, like those who employ him.

Wages either rise or remain stationary, just as the purchasing power of money increases, or—another way to put it—the prices of provisions go

down. The general tendency of articles of consumption is to go down. For all this the labourer shuts his ears to those who want to persuade him of the advantages of fair trade, or protection. Hodge—that is the usual way of calling the labourer—listens with greater favour to doctrines that promise him a more rapid, direct, and gratuitous amelioration of his condition. This is the general tone of the advice he likes best.

Parish councils, as an instrument of rural socialism, are proclaimed in a way that the proclaimers of Liberalism—Gladstone, Morley, and Harcourt—even sometimes consider excessive. In the meanwhile one finds written: "If the public credit has to be employed in the purchase of land, the purchase must be made by public bodies and for the public benefit. The labourer works seventy-two hours a week, from six to six daily, for nine or ten shillings: it is time that such a state of things should cease, in order that rural districts may possess for the sons of toil as many attractions as, or more than, the towns." But on reckoning up—even if the whole of the nett profit on the land went to the labourer—even then would the wages be able still to compete with those earned in factories and town employment? But what if, in order to increase the value of the land, it is necessary to raise the price of necessities by hindering importation? And what if this struck at the pocket of the legions of workmen and traders swarming

in the factories and on the wharves and in the docks?

Perhaps Hodge, stooping in his chair at the door of his cottage, may, with the experience of years, be making observations of this sort on the things that the fair-haired and blue-eyed daughter goes on reading to him from the magazine. The evil of the country lies in the changeableness of the weather. The old man has seen the railway, the telegraph, and the steamers make their appearance; all these economisers of strength and time that make one live and acquire and enjoy in a year as much as formerly one had in one's whole life. And the poor land over which Hodge was stooping down looking for his peace in the grave, in spite of new implements and scientific manures, lags behind like an old and weary horse. If the people emigrate from the country it is because, of all the ways to make their fortune, agriculture is the slowest. If everybody flies to London, the congested heart of England, it is because it is the polypus whose many feelers spread out, sucking the riches of the world in every part of the globe; London, the great *wen* of England, the swelling, the abscess, the cancer. . . . The train arrived at Waterloo Station.

### III

#### VIEW OF BABYLON

AS soon as we passed Clapham Junction, where are united the railways of the right bank of the Thames, the line proceeds on viaducts at a little higher level than the river, the border of the colossal streets of houses, that extends till it is lost to view. It is a Babel of tiles, an infinite ant-hill. The little black houses are heaped up in irregular streets, giving at the same moment an impression of both magnificence and meanness. Magnificent in general proportions, mean in the character of its elements, London is a city extending by juxtaposition, a gigantic accretion of houses. Its heart opens to the public with the sensation that one is entering the belly of the great monster of the world.

This sacred home of the Britons, when observed for the first time, as was the case with me, in the clear light of a glorious June day, inspires fear. The impression is powerful, but I cannot call it agreeable. The sun inhumanly exposes the misery of the poor quarters, with their houses blackened

with smoke, hedged about with sticky fogs, with yards, courts, decay, dirt, and an immense sea of little chimneys rising from the slated roofs, like little fingers of pigmies, pointing comically to the sky. The whole is grotesque. It has no grandeur, though one may allow that it possesses immensity, this sea of houses over which the train rolls along till it arrives at the dark cavern called Waterloo Station.

Here we were emptied into a steep declivity; and in order to take in a full view of this first impression, we walked on foot through the lanes that lead on to the Thames, crossing it by the Charing Cross railway bridge. (The English for brevity represent this word by the sign +.) Thence descending the stairs on to the Embankment on the left bank, we found ourselves by the side of the river asking for our hotel, the Savoy, opposite Cleopatra's Needle.

From the verandahs of the Savoy, London presents a different aspect. The Thames there makes a wide bend, convex opposite the left bank, upon which I was. Looking downwards I saw at a little distance Waterloo Bridge, of stone, covered with people and vehicles in an incessant stream. Looking upwards I saw close to me Charing Cross (or *Anglicé* Charing +) railway bridge, breathing smoke from the trains that keep passing over on several lines of metal, with a noise of distant thunder coming through the lattice-work that



encloses the level of the bridge. Then, on the same side, beyond Westminster Bridge, the pinnacles and gilded summits of the roofs of the Houses of Parliament nailed themselves to the sky, now getting dusk with evening.

"Does not it seem to you that this gives you an impression of the East?" asked my companion of me.

Just at this moment I was steadily regarding the opposite bank, where beyond the river, with its colour of fuller's earth, with its laden barges, and its long steamers crowded with passengers, there arose two slender towers like Arab minarets: these were towers for the manufacture of small shot.

But close too, on this side, crouching down near to the river, humorously smiled the two sphinxes by the sides of Cleopatra's Needle, the latter placed on a base of bronze. In effect the view lent itself to some indefinite notion of the East. I do not know if it was of India, as I asked my companion, or whether of Egypt, as the sphinxes suggested to me; but perhaps, in virtue of the ideas with which I came, from Assyria or Babylon, in the colossal times of Sargon or Assurbanipal. At night I dreamt I was in Nineveh; perhaps because before going to bed, as the moon was magnificently bright, the Thames appeared like a carpet of fishes' scales of burnished steel; the bridge like a constant repetition of flashes followed by thunder; and the lights of the illuminated city,

and the gilded summits of Westminster, with the silver-dotted sheet of sky in the background, filled me with the idea of the sight of the pictures that Turner painted, in curious lights, of the ruins of the burned city of the Euphrates.

I put aside the great modern Babylon, and there came to my ears the gigantic hum of millions of human beings, who go out of their way to agitate themselves with the painful murmur implied in a life by ourselves made up of toils and troubles, while Nature, kind and simple, has portioned it out to us as calm and easy.

I heard the gigantic palpitation, the dull thunder, of these twenty thousand streets of London that measure three thousand miles, and give access to nine hundred thousand houses, and carry streams of people along them in more than ten thousand cabs, besides a thousand tramway-cars, two thousand omnibuses, and local railways, including the Underground, that goes under the streets. Of drivers and conductors alone there is an army of thirty thousand men. In the City alone, the kernel of the immense fruit called London, grown with the substance of the whole world—in the City alone, there go daily in and out, except on Sundays, ninety thousand vehicles and more than a million people. Within a radius of six or seven miles from Charing Cross, there are within the circumference of London more than two hundred miles of rail in operation.

London is the double of Paris, the triple of Berlin, nearly the quadruple of Vienna or New York, the quintuple of St. Petersburg, more than ten times the size of Madrid, and fifteen times as large as Rome and Copenhagen. It has more Catholics than Rome, more Jews than all Palestine, more Scotch than Aberdeen, more Welsh than Cardiff, and more Irish than Belfast.

When the humble City took its origin as capital of the Kingdom of Essex in the sixth century, it had an area of scarcely six hundred and fifty acres. This is still the area of it to-day, with its forty thousand inhabitants, divided into twenty-six wards, each of which elects an alderman for life, as in the remote time when these magistrates went with a wand of *alder* in the hand to the *mallum* or parliament of the period. The aldermen elect annually among themselves the Lord Mayor. The English raise to a height the worship of tradition and respect for antiquity. This intrepid people is nevertheless 'infantilely timorous' in presence of everything that it does not understand. Of all Europeans they are perhaps the least gifted with ~~inventive~~ curiosity, although they are at the same time the boldest executants. Good machines, but middling machinists.

Around the nucleus of the City London grew up. It is called the "Metropolis" or "County of London," is governed by an elective Municipal Council, and has an area of 75,461 acres, which is

still not quite all London, because independently of the London County Council there are different corporations at work, each of which has its own proper district. The postal district, the electoral district, the Inland Revenue district, etc., do not coincide. The School Board, boards for the management of asylums, cemeteries, etc., eighteen autonomous committees, work independently. The police district, over which is exercised the action of the yet small army of fifteen thousand constables, occupies 451,559 acres in a circle of a fifteen miles' radius measured from Charing Cross. It is the "Greater London," in which parks and forests occupy an area of thirteen thousand acres. Epping Forest alone has five thousand, Wimbledon Common fifteen hundred, Hyde Park three hundred and sixty, and Regent's Park almost five hundred.

This immense city, with a greater population than that of many a country, possesses five hundred theatres and places of amusement of every kind, capable of holding thirty thousand spectators. Everything here is enormous, which does not mean that it is necessarily grand in the sense of great beauty. The Albert Hall seems an antique amphitheatre, except for the roof. The value of the property of "Inner London," or the "County of London," is reckoned at thirty-eight millions sterling. All the numbers stated in the *Metropolitan Year Book*, the municipal report for the year, are correspondingly enormous.

The English have a considerable appetite for reading ; filling their heads up with facts and figures for digestion, in the same way that they fill up their stomachs with half-raw joints and heady drinks. As their stomachs are as strong as their heads, they are capable of digesting them, with, however, more or less difficulty. Besides books, they read more than thirty daily newspapers of immense size, and fifty or sixty periodicals, reviews, magazines, etc. On the other hand, besides what they eat at home, they eat and drink in taverns of the number of fourteen thousand—the number of licences for public-houses, beer-shops, refreshment-rooms, wine-shops, etc.

This great beehive of voracious people swallows every year two million quarters of wheat ; eight hundred thousand oxen ; four million sheep, calves, and pigs ; nine million birds ; a hundred and fifty thousand tons of fish ; two hundred million gallons of beer ; thirty million of wine ; twenty million of spirits, the fire with which they warm themselves internally ; while they burn twelve million tons of coal to warm themselves against external cold, ~~both~~ for the sake of self-preservation and that of self-excitation, by transforming fuel into steam as the active means of their pertinacious travelling.

## IV

### LONDON ARCHITECTURE

WHEN I went out in the morning to take an outside view of the city, going along the Embankment I found myself under the Charing Cross Bridge, between the massive columns, joined together, of the colour of the blood of an ox, having above my head a roof of iron plates of the same colour, and over the roof the trains rolling along rapidly on rails of polished steel. I thought I was in some new sort of Egypt, Babylonia, or wherever it might be externally, monstrously ancient. At the upper end of Northumberland Avenue I was face to face with the columns and terraces of the National Gallery, which forms the background of Trafalgar Square. These columns, these porticoes, these balustrades, heavy and massive, black as coal smeared with fallow, with the fountains in front throwing up water at the foot of Nelson's Monument, where the hero stands upon a coil of rope; all this black, contrasting with the exceptionally blue sky, produced in me a singular, grotesquely tragic

impression, all the more as at the foot of the column the four most beautiful lions of Landseer, resting like sphinxes, spoke to me of the epic grandeur of the people who are indeed at the present time, and as the Romans were in the past, the powerful rulers of men.

Without doubt the impression of the *ancient* in London, now on account of the blackness of the stone, which appears gangrened, now on account of the want of light elegance in the buildings, is grotesque without, however, being ridiculous. It is raw and incongruous; obscurely great without being grand. We are not in Athens; no! It is not a people of artists; no! But even in Rome the monuments possess an appearance heavily colossal, capable of producing impressions analogous to my own in the minds of the Greeks who visited the imperial city of the Tiber.

Analogous, I say, but not equal, because between Rome and London the difference is enormous. Only the *imperial* instinct appears; the sky is different, so is the genius of the people. In spite of the æsthetic inferiority, never to a Roman would occur the idea of putting a parasol on the head of the Duke of York, who from the top of a column looks on to St. James's Park; never one of exposing, naked and of the size of a rhinoceros, the Duke of Wellington, in the attitude of Alcides, brandishing a kitchen-knife at the entrance to Hyde Park.

Decidedly, London seen from the outside weighs upon my heart. It is *Oriental*, as my companion wills it, if by that word we understand things monumentally.

We are here in the heart of the monster. Looking down from the terraces of the National Gallery runs Whitehall, which leads in a straight line to Westminster and the Thames, with the historic palace where Wolsey displayed his almost royal luxury, where Henry VIII. at a masked ball lost his heart to Anne Boleyn, and Charles I. lost his head in the courtyard, in the tragic times of English history. Here the Horse Guards, plumed and wearing on their heads the monumental helmets of the beginning of the century, do sentry duty. The Foreign Office, the India Office, the Admiralty, and the Treasury border the wide Avenue, and each of these names, evoking ideas of a huge power, imposes respect.

To the right of all this, towards the west, is St. James's Park, bounded lengthways by the Mall. On higher ground stretches the street of clubs, Pall Mall, with blackened palaces, arcades that look like caverns, columns that seem posts made of coal, and windows with splendid plate-glass like mirrors, through which may be seen incomparable arm-chairs and carpets even softer than the turf of the parks; all the luxury, solid and comfortable, but not tasteful, of the interiors of English houses. It is summer-time, and the windows are decked with flowers.



At the back is St. James's, the palace of Henry VIII., with its gate in pure Tudor style ; and this kind of construction, substantial but slender, is that which harmonises with the climate and the view. It does not strike one as absurd like the classic. Here at the beginning of Pall Mall lies before us Waterloo Place, with its monument of the Crimea, grenadiers with head-gear like those of Whitehall ; but here they are happily of bronze, so that the fortunate fellows cannot feel the weight. Up-hill goes Regent Street, which soon unfolds in a fine curve, which the Londoners persist in calling the "Quadrant," and from the commencement of this quarter circle, which takes Regent Street in a northerly direction, Piccadilly starts westwards at a right angle. These are the two great streets of fashionable London.

Left of the terrace of the Gallery, where we are, from the meeting-point of Charing Cross, in front of the Mall, commences the Strand, a long artery parallel to the river, joining *fashionable* London with *City* London, with a distance of two miles from Charing Cross to the Mansion House, the ~~heart~~ <sup>heart</sup> of the City and the residence of the Lord Mayor.

In front of Trafalgar Square, to the east of Whitehall, cut in half by Northumberland Avenue, is the quarter of the hotels of the newest part of London. They are enormous houses of six floors, in the Parisian style, reproducing in a heavy way

the City architecture of the Continent. There are the Metropole, the Victoria, the Grand Hotel, and in the Strand, a little more forward, the Charing Cross Hotel, in the railway station of the same name.

In the inspection that we made, we recognised three different architectural styles : the Tudor, the Classic, and the Continental style of the massive blocks of Paris. There are still more types of houses yet to be added. First Queen Anne's style, like the "Jesuit" style in the Peninsula, of which the façade and the tower of Whitehall are examples, and then the type of old house without style or artistic design. It is a wall of smooth bricks with three rectangular openings in each of the three floors, the ground floor and the two above it.

Four-fifths of London, including the miserable quarters, are of this kind : whole streets, enormous streets, of little nests without the least idea of scenic design, form the homes of John Bull. Each house has one only tenant ; when the door is shut it is a bulwark inviolable by law. The door shines with brazen locks polished every day ; the window-panes have no grain of dust or spot of water. Outside there are almost always flowers on the window-sills ; inside there are always curtains of more or less fine texture, more or less closed together. All has an air of cleanliness and tolerable comfort. Sometimes in front of the house there is

a ditch defended by a gate bordering on the street ; at other times a little garden ; at others thick glasses, like a ship's dead-lights, to illuminate the basement, in which are the kitchens, the cellar, and the dust-bin.

Now there are most luxurious houses in which purse-pride predominates, asserting itself in works of better or worse taste, but in general without character. Until the middle of the century, however, domestic architecture, simple outside, and the horrid Greco-Roman monuments, might be said to constitute London. Even the palaces of the nobility, for instance that of Lord Salisbury, or of the Duke of Wellington at the entrance to Hyde Park, are properties of relatively modest and simple appearance. The first appears a mere shopkeeper's residence. London was the capital of a great Protestant people, rigid, hard-working, greedy, and disdainful of the externals of life. For all these reasons they were not an artistic people ; hence the grotesque character of the London buildings of the period. They reveal a vast mass of nobly powerful sentiment, but they reveal it in a manner midway between the puerile and the extravagant. The period of the Napoleonic wars is written in stone everywhere, but with the scrawls of a people writing with an effort.

Since 1850, the marvellous enrichment of England and her exceptional fortune affected the antique, and modified the aspect of the town.

However, the English sought to be artists, and to embellish and modernise their capital by copying Paris, in spite of the disdain they affect for the Continent. They found themselves exquisites and yet inferiors, and with their purses ready to burst with sovereigns they went about rebuilding London. There came great spacious avenues and palaces in the manner of the French or Italian Renaissance, blocks of houses in floors and flats in the French style as a substitute for the old English *home*; red-tile and terra-cotta in the German style of Hanover and Prussia, and finally there came the restoration of the national Tudor style that predominates in the palaces and in private houses, and with which, more or less, are inspired the best later buildings of London.

Without any doubt, the preference lies in favour of the awe-inspiring Roman columns and tympana. It harmonises better with the scenery: it gives an impression more in conformity with the climate; but in very truth it is out of harmony with all systematically-designed rebuilding. It has a *bric-à-brac* air. There is apparent the endeavour of a rich people imagining that everything is to be got for money, and wanting to be artists at the cost of millions. What they are is enough for them.

The real monuments of the London of to-day are in my opinion seen in the buildings spontaneously born of the necessities of the dominant character of this Carthaginian civilisation. They

are the Crystal Palaces of the popular Exhibitions ; they are the massive and utilitarian bridges ; the awe-inspiring railway stations, where the people huddle together in the vertigo of bustle, and the walls, inside and outside, the roofs, the ground, the seats, the glass-work, absolutely everything is bedaubed with advertisements in colossal letters of strident colours to force the attention of passers-by.

Advertisement — the bill-frenzy — was among the things that impressed me most. They persecute one everywhere. In the stations they are a delirium. They paint omnibuses with them. They line carriages with them. They put them above the roofs of houses in great letters of gold hanging up for the wind to shake. They are the English æolian harps.

Everything is advertised, absolutely everything : clothes, shoes, furniture, articles of luxury, poverty, the most extravagant medicines, the most curious utensils, with nauseating names, extracted from rare or dead languages, with certificates from the medical faculty and the learned generally. It is ~~even~~ a Carnival scene. I saw in a journey, I know not where, hung up from the roof more than a hundred bills successively announcing with an irritating obstinacy a certain substance which washed and yet was not soap.

And as these dodges pay, and as rivers of money are spent in advertisement, it is sad to think that the colossal metropolis of a great people bows

down to such an extent before quackery, or that it is necessary to use quack measures to attract attention. English eccentricity shows itself in the stupid proportions of advertisement ; though advertisement in general is an ailment of all great cities.

Will it be that an agglomeration of people makes men imbecile ? Will it be that civilisation, as so many seek to make out, is not passing out of a period of sickness ? Or will it be that London is indeed the British wen or abscess ?

## V

### THE PEOPLE

ONLY just now do I remember that I have made a desert city out of London, the most populous piece of land in the world.

The County of London, according to the census of 1891, has 4,211,056 inhabitants; and the police-district, or "Greater London," 1,422,276 more: total 5,633,332, almost six million creatures; almost as much as the population of Belgium, more than that of Holland or Portugal, and about three times that of Denmark. It is the most populous city in the world, and the County of London is the land in which the people are most closely packed together. The density of population in London is 59 per acre, Liverpool alone exceeds it: this black ant-hill has 118 to an acre, exactly double. Thirty years ago the area now called the "County of London" had 2,803,847 inhabitants, and the exterior zone 418,873: total 3,222,720. In thirty years it has risen 80 per cent. In the interior of the town the increase was 50, but, spreading outwards, the population of the exterior zone

increased two and a half times. There is no city in the world that presents such a growth in so high a number. I do not, therefore, wonder that it absorbs the population of the country. London represents a seventh part of the entire population of England and Wales. Moreover, there is no one among the great capitals where the nett increase of population, as a balance between births and deaths, is greater. Without mentioning St. Petersburg, where the deaths much exceed the births, Madrid which has a balance of one in the thousand, there rises a scale at the top of which is London, with a balance of a hundred and thirty-seven per thousand. The national habits of the people, the great proportion of poor, and even the hygienic conditions of the town, explain this phenomenon, of which the principal cause, however, is in the great propagation of the unfortunate. Misery is prolific, and the Englishman more sensual and animal than any European. The *Metropolitan Year Book*, from which I am drawing these statistics, classifies one-third of the population of the County of London as poor. There are one million three hundred thousand in poverty. The misery is the residuum of the great manufacture of millions of money that insolently displays the meaner side of the wealth of the exhibitions of the West End. Side by side—East and West—there are two Londons at enmity and severance: that of the poor and that of the rich. The detective



with whom I went through the miserable quarters in the repugnant narrow streets of Whitechapel told me that people of the East End are born and die without knowing anything of the existence that lies at the other end of the Strand. The West End is for them an unknown land. Alas for the day when they discover it! The scenes of Trafalgar Square were a dark forewarning. Once upon a time a multitude of hungry savages ran along the Strand, and fashionable London grew pale with fright when it saw a massing of hordes, more terrible than those of Attila, encamping on the steps of the square by the side of Landseer's magnificent lions, who seemed to blush at them.

Upon this soil of more than a million poor rest the solid foundation of the operative population, 2,167,126, who feed 749,611 well-off townspeople, raising it up to the sky like the spires or gilded summits of an immense cathedral of flesh, the opulent flowers of civilisation, magnolias or orchids, dainty flowers watered with the work of the whole world, blooming in toilettes and carriages in the evening in the shady avenues of Hyde Park.

All this people are revolving in a concentrated and intensely grave agitation, either for work or for amusement. Whoever comes over from the Continent by way of Paris to this country notices that the intensity of the pressure of life rises considerably. The compressed steam issues from the joints, the motion of the engine is faster, the blows

of the hammer are heavier, life is more substantial, riches more solid, the character firmer, but nevertheless more artificial. Here the human engine produces more useful work, but yet with more wear and tear. Its ashes and exhaust are the million of poor that it is continually discharging into the vast black sea of misery, drunkenness, and crime ; and its vibration is made up of the daily-recurring losses and accidents. In the streets there are ten accidents a day, and three hundred fatal ones in the year. And in the midst of this Babel there are lost every year seventeen thousand persons—almost all of them children—several thousands of this whole mass of creatures vanishing altogether in the gulf, as those sink in the ocean whom the wave casts over the bulwark in a storm. And above the tumultuous bubble of this great boiler of people plies a legion of policemen, mute and automatic, putting disorder to rights, raising the fallen, taking care of the careless, arresting the drunken and disorderly ; police in dark uniform and leather cape, thick and herculean, sparing of words, quick and firm in action.

The submissive Englishman (there are no people more so) obeys the police religiously and unquestioningly. On this account also the London police are additionally good. Submission and a singular imbecility peculiar to great agglomerations of people in capitals become more sensible here in the midst of a number of beings strong but out of joint, who,

agitated at times to the verge of epilepsy, go each his own way, yet all together, impelled by the colossal dream of making money. This is indeed what turns their heads.

To the great illusion of wealth, the perpetual mirage of town-life, created by the ostentation of luxury, the Englishman can never unite, because he does not possess, the instinct of art, and that indifference with which we Continentals (a name used here with decided contempt) temper the violence of the life called civilised. On this account, as the shady side of such grandeur, I never have seen anywhere brutality more brutal, or stupidity more stupid.

I remember some years ago in Paris the people laughed till their bones rattled as they applied constantly to everything the cant phrase, "*On dirait du veau.*" It was apish even to imbecility. Now, while yet on the voyage on board the ship, I began to hear the refrain that in London persecutes us like flies on the beach, sung, whistled, grunted, cried, chirped, in every tone by both sexes—there are several, not two only—and by all ages, that insufferable cricket that pretends to be a song—

"Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay."

What does it mean? It does not matter. It is an indistinct sound: every one adapts to it the meaning he thinks best. This is how languages began in primitive periods, by interjections.

The life of great cities has more than one point of contact with savage life. Man in this tumultuous ebullition goes back to his native state of intellectual twilight in which intentions, vague as the will-o'-the-wisp, are scarcely to be noted.

“Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay”

was the refrain or burden of a song a certain female performer sang at the theatre in burlesque scenes of gay life, finishing each verse with an immodest jig accompanied by the cricket's chirp—

“Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay.”

This nonsense took. It was the delight of the Londoners while I had anything to do with them. The old Quakerism, the historic Puritanism, the austerity that this people adopt reacted after the vanities of the eighteenth century veiled their faces with shame. England, that had lived so many years in a pose of modesty, gave herself up in an attitude of shame, but badly and without grace.

## VI

### THE TYPES

THE temperament of the English, at once violent and sanguine, imposes on them both rigidity in virtue and unrestrainedness in vice.

Often when I observed the physiognomies and searched the characters expressed in the features, I arrived at results that satisfied me. I felt I had hit the mark ; and the faces that passed before my view with as little expression as sphinxes, went on forming, letter for letter, the words I constructed in my thought. The observation of the types of a race is always a suggestive spectacle.

That which attracted me above all was the children. There are none more beautiful anywhere. They are like butterflies or swarms of bees both in wealthy streets and poor lanes, rich and poor, clean and dirty. Before the beauty of infancy equality is sovereign in England. The little ones seem bouquets of flowers. Ruddy, with flesh of milk and roses that reminds one of Rubens, one feels the strength of race predominate. One would say that Nature, mother of contradictions,

made these young shoots of humanity, more bony and angular than are to be found anywhere, into creatures that seem cherubim descended from heaven. Between two cheeks like roses the short mouth seems like a cherry. The scarlet of the lips laughs; the blue of the eyes, placed widely apart, laughs too. The whole face sings, the whole face lives, whether it laughs or cries, covered with the arms raised and the hands crossed in an attitude of enchanting despair.

Then the loose flowing, golden hair—like flax dried in the sun with a tinge of gold—on their little heads, upon bodies just growing, flexible like a vine, running, jumping, chirping like sparrows, calls to mind the well-known verse of Victor Hugo. And indeed those little girls, that Dickens paints in *David Copperfield*, have wings as well, wings with which they fly towards the ether of maidenly comeliness, wings that carry them in flights away out of this world, planting in all parts the *home* of the Saxon, affording him love, peace, and enchantment, in the hours vacant from the cruel contest of life.

Enough, however, of children. Let us pass on to the grown-up people.

- John Bull, the type of Punch's caricatures, cannot be said to be the representative of the Londoners of the present day. John Bull remained provincial. When the buds in the bouquet of flowers unfold they *produce* a different kind of

creature. The infant made of milk and roses, that used to develop into a bull-dog's face over a stout cattle salesman's body, pot-bellied and in Wellington boots, in an attitude insolently heavy, becomes, now, that half-a-century of universal power and incomparable riches have had their effects upon the race, a type more lively, more agile, more graceful. More sympathetic? I do not know. It is less pleasant. The expression of the eyes, fixed and shining like those of cats, announces the ferocious character of modern life, foreign to the repose and stability of former times, in which John Bull calmly worked as a farmer upon his own land without any care. Now he has to live through the whirlwind of the town; he has to become industrial, giving himself up, in the great country of men, to hunting the hare that he calls a sovereign, under pain of being thrown on one side like a rag upon a dust-heap of human misery. The intensity of life reacts upon the anatomy of the body. John Bull *has become an American*.

But he has not on this account lost the more striking lines of his physiognomy, the short neck, ~~the~~ large jaw-bone of the powerful masticator, the lively eye with the thick eyebrows announcing the animal spirits in his choleric temperament. The fleshy profile with large upper lip, the regular mark of the heavy intelligence always seen in the air of suppression on the countenance and in the facility of expression of wonderment. It may be said that

the Englishman is in a chronic condition of being startled. *Oh*, pronounced thus: *A—oo*, slowly and dreamily, is a constant interjection. They have a catarrh from birth. "They are born with a cold," said F. to me, "caught from the damp and fogs." In fact they give the impression of people without a clear notion of what they see, as if they were journeying along in a violent storm.

Another expression of the same kind is the quantity of "yes's" they chew and swallow in conversation. They sip it slowly, *y'-e-ss*, or swallow it at a gulp, *'es*! But this abuse of the interjection, a sign of a rudimentary mind, gives in conversation and business a tone of communicative intimacy which is scarcely formal. For the reason also that he lives nearer nature, the Englishman has more loyalty, better humour, more spontaneous joy, many more of those qualities that a musing intellect extinguishes in men; many more of those qualities which in one sense we may call barbarous, but which give consistency, tenacity, firmness, and strength to his character. The worst of all this is, however, that it is, up to a certain point, the result of a general bashfulness, a longing to be rational among a people not born to be philosophers, and to be beautiful among a people not born to be artists.

Why, in the mouth of the woman, to whom we look for other qualities, does a *y'-e-ss* breathed out gradually and tenderly, and rendered sublime



by the inclination of the eyelids above the eyes, and an 'es! hissing between lips red like pomegranates, like a kiss that the air gives them, or an *oh-h* of candid admiration or of expressed indignation—all this interjection, which in the mouths of men makes us smile, in those of women gives to the conversation that amount of communicative intimacy from which, with the instinct of the sexes, comes the *flirt*? The indeterminateness, the fog, is the same. *Flirtation* is love that has caught a cold.

It is that the climate depresses instead of excites. Life imposes on us men an excess of physical exercise and a corresponding excess of food and drink! The over-nourishment of the animal machine paralyses the development of the intellect. The ideal of life gets to be a mere agreeable state of vegetation, and in a harsh climate, by an illusory effort of the imagination, Paradise is situated in the *home*, well closed up and sheltered from the weather. The fact is, however, that their ideal of home is for Englishmen an impalpable illusion, as we shall have occasion to remark. As a matter of fact, the inner instinct of the race is nomad, and this is on the increase, in proportion as facility for travel accentuates this feature.

In the women, moreover, conditions of life such as these, uniting themselves to the inborn sentimentality of the race, produce an admirable combination that gives them that priority which they

justly enjoy in England more than in any part of the world. They are the first from more than one point of view. And then how singularly they contrast with the angular and hirsute automata, perfect lay figures of magnificent attire, walking with long steps, trousers turned up or not, just as may be the fashion, covered with great-coat as with a shroud, rose in the button-hole, walking-stick with knob, and the arm held forward at a right angle. These are the *swells* of Regent Street or Piccadilly, who are going to exhibit themselves in the evening. It is half grotesque. Ugliness is uglier here than on the Continent, and the Japanese craze, which here lays down the law, imposes courtly extravagance. On this account no one carries away the palm from the English, who are the tailors of all Europe. For the women Paris still holds the sceptre.

However, the harsh exterior of the Saxon, harsh outside and in, contrasts singularly with his personal qualities. The angularity of the first interview does not appear to me to be other than the shyness of a people who inside their complacency, at times excessive, preserve the little soul of a child. They are a bashful people because they are a proud people, in whom a strong inner life (strong does not mean subtle or deep) embarrasses the development of social endowments. As soon as, however, the ice of the first contact thaws, the Englishman appears with qualities that are solid

and spontaneous. He has no wit, but he has cheerfulness ; he does not know how to manufacture compliments or cap verses, but he possesses a frankness of demeanour soberly affable. The good qualities appear tempered by education, the inferior ones impress us with naturalness. Relations are more firm, more natural, more serious. The man who is anywhere designated as *fine* is such as he is here ; but never more completely so than among the people that to the word "gentleman" has inseparably united the ideas of good manners and personal dignity. On the Continent, the *homme du monde* may be a refined rogue and known as such.

## VII

### HORSES AND WOMEN

I OFTEN went like the rest to Hyde Park on week-day evenings and after morning service on Sundays. In the evenings people go in carriages or on horseback; after morning service they go on foot. It is not good form to go in carriages on Sunday into the Park. The people congregate at the *Corner*, at the turn of the grass that lines the exit at which Wellington, gigantic and naked, holds his kitchen-knife.

The park is an imitation of the country. There is also an extensive view of a bath of green water. There are the same nobly-tufted trees spreading their thick and dark foliage over the horizon of turf, with the same surrounding of blue atmosphere mingling with the masses of arboreal vegetation. There are the same nosegays of rhododendrons and azaleas, with their metallic colouring of purple, or red set on emerald grounds. There are still the sheep grazing in flocks. I did not see any cows, but it is probable that there were some. Finally, there are the groups of children

playing upon the grass, or boys playing at cricket or football on the green.

Let us, however, leave this on one side: we will speak at another time of *sport*. Now we come to the Park to see the horses and the women, the two products most refinedly capricious and most superiorly cultivated of English civilisation.

I am not what is called a "horsey man"; on that account, indeed, I do not gaze with wonderment at those stuck-up animals that possess a forced development of posterior members that call to mind the kangaroo, with slender legs that look like the supports of a bier, with enormous chests to admit of the respiration necessary for horse-races. I am not a horsey man: I do not go into ecstasies before types of thoroughbred machines produced by an art long exercised in selection, training, and heredity. I do not go into ecstasies; I rather, on the contrary, have some trouble in restraining myself from laughing, irreverently no doubt, when I see on the top of one of these cranes with long, stretched-out neck, a pot-bellied ~~old~~ gentleman with a shaven face and a hat down in the nape of his neck trotting for his health,—they prescribe a good deal of riding for obesity,—or perched up on another crane a black stork, all bones, with a profile as sharp as a barber's razor long whiskers, a large flower in the bosom, and on the head a hat irreproachably lustrous.

Alas for him who does not have his hat brushed before he goes out!

"We are the best-dressed people in Europe," said to me, gravely and seriously, a certain horseman with whom I found myself more than once in Hyde Park.

But when the horse, whose hide shines like the man's hat, gallops elastically along the track called "Rotten Row," carrying on his back a fair-haired, blue-eyed maiden clothed in black, an angel transformed into a centaur, a sylph with muscles of steel, that passes by leaving us in doubt as to the exactness of her human reality, I, although not horsey, cannot fail to feel within me some sort of semblance of enthusiasm.

In sober earnest, the fair-haired, blue-eyed *miss*, profoundly sweet, with the fine bust unfolding in the elegance of slim beauty, with the velvety skin of an orchid, the seduction of an angelic smile, maidenhood leaping up in the sudden vermilion of the face, and modestly written (how many times, alas! in unbecoming language) in the lowering of the eyelids fringed with long eyelashes; the *miss*, fair image of innocence, Eve incapable of falling, whose words sound like crystalline notes, and whose look possesses ineffable sincerities; in very truth she makes you wish that people would fall on their knees before her, not as before women, but with the adoration due to the seraphim.

These are in fact the *thoroughbreds*, the superior

artificial products of the English refinery. They are the pick of the race. It is they who gave the ideally enchanting types of Shakespeare : Virginia, Imogene, Desdemona, Ophelia, Juliet ; or of Dickens : Esther and Agnes. They are the finest and most perfect feminine flowers, the poetry of ethereal youth, as far as woman can reach it. For this reason nobody takes the palm away from the fair-haired miss. There are fair ones on the Continent, the Germans ; but they are heavy and insipid. For maidens, the English. Hence also the reception accorded to the pre-Raphaelite Madonnas of Millais and the painters of the present day.

But yet in spite of the pride the English take in their *misses*, this worship is exceeded by the veneration unanimously devoted to the really accomplished English matron, whose end in life is to satisfy all the wants of social rites, leaving to her husband the plenitude of a satisfaction pretentiously phlegmatic, and a felicity perfect up to the verge of dying of tedium. This is because the efflorescence of the *misses* scarcely lasts an instant. Their beauty was "the devil's"; it was in the freshness of the skin, in the ingenuousness of the look, in the brilliant gilding of the hair. Under the velvety skin hard bones are growing. The faces little by little assume a cutting expression, like that of some ladies, already mothers, who passed by in their carriage drawn by a splendid

pair of Scandinavian trotters. Superfluity has withered them up, and as their beauty was not geometric, unpromising physiognomies have begun to design themselves. The air cuts their skin; their faces shrivel with veins and hard lines; their noses either get as sharp as razors, or assume the colour of tomatoes. Sometimes they call to mind raw beef, at other times under their reddish hair, more or less dyed, they seem vine-leaves tinged by an autumn sun. Their mouths grow ugly; the teeth, growing forward, attack one carnivorously. The feet at times attain the limits of grotesque ugliness, suspended on legs like poles; while the necks get as lanky as drakes'. They look like people crying for help, and one recognises the propriety with which Garrett divided humanity into three sexes: masculine, feminine, and old Englishwoman.

It is enough to draw tears from stones when we remember that the fair-haired, sweet blue-eyed *misses* turn into these! It is true that there are also some who look like Nuremberg dolls, with glass eyes and sawdust. And the transformation of the angel into beings for which I find no name is infallible. There are some very nice women, more or less ripe fruits, who resist it at the cost of God knows how much recourse to the toilette; but the rule is unfortunately deplorable.

Outside Hyde Park, on foot in the streets, one sees women still, and in what swarms! It is here



that one is impressed with the want of æsthetic taste among the people. Elegant ladies dress themselves everywhere at the hands of Parisian *modistes*. But the Englishwoman, whose palate reminds one of salted meat swimming in sauces that scratch one's throat—she, to look at, must have garish colours. She excessively abuses yellow of a deep gold colour, and red that one uses to startle the bulls with. It is true that the climate, without sun or light, abates the rawness of the colours, and makes half tints imperceptible. Perhaps from that fact comes the want of nervous sensibility of sight and smell.

Phlegmatically speaking, women here wallow in lowness in the matter of loose living. Vice, like ugliness, here seemed to me, and is, more funereal. One breathes a lukewarm atmosphere of concupiscence. In the raw glare of the gas and the sepulchral illumination of electricity in the irregularly-planned streets to the west of Trafalgar Square, turning round up the Haymarket, under the arcades of Pall Mall, at the commencement of Piccadilly, both up and across, all the way along Regent Street, and on the opposite side at the entrance to the Strand, Nelson at the top of his column and the four Assyrian lions preside over a market of the same wares even larger than the old Babylonian temples. Then it is that London possesses a veritably Oriental aspect; when orgie, under the protection of the police, wings its flight

unchecked, and the groups of bacchanalians overrun the street pavements, rending the air with their laughter, drunkenness hanging on to one arm and licentiousness on to the other, between the spectral diffusion of the electric light or under the harsh gas smothered by the darkness of the heavy air. There it goes rolling along, thick with rivers of women pouring themselves out. Here is the vast saloon of the St. James's Restaurant just closing; beyond is the Alhambra, where the piece has just finished; in front, the Empire, that makes the record in the prurient exhibition of dazzling ballets. The market of flesh is growing larger, and with equal voracity the Englishman swallows his joint and his love. The wave rolls on, the streets empty themselves. Like spectres or suffering souls the later ones walk along, trailing their unsteady gait, and obtruding their lugubrious smile. And yet (contrast unspeakably horrible!) here also appears Imogene or Virginia, with her golden hair like ripe wheat, and her blue eyes, velvety soft. . . .

It is the usury, the lavishness, the wear and tear of society natural through impulse of violent temperament, moralist through effort of mystic will. Left to himself, if he could forget constitutional respect for God and for the law, the Englishman would be (and has been whenever he has been able to be) a bull without a yoke, a horse without a bit. He does not possess inborn morality, natural

and easy, like people in whom rational intellect predominates. In him the predominant note is *animal spirits*, contained and restrained by a discipline which voluntarily keeps him in check, yet without having a complete consciousness of the act. It is an instinct of preservation that dictates to him morality and religious piety. Hence his inferiority adds to his strength; because society possesses, in the matter of gravity and respect, the cement of a more solid cohesion in proportion as this individual possesses a sounder energy than any other European whatsoever.

And this same observation, that is, the co-existence of naturalism and instinctive religious feeling, explains the worship they render to their two best works of art, horses and women. The horse is the primary implement of *sport*, in which naturalism mainly affirms itself. The woman is the Hestia, or Vesta, the goddess of the domestic hearth, lady or queen of home, from which she reigns, disciplining life, keeping the bread-winner under the rule, often badly endured, of morals or of *cant*.

## VIII

### RICHMOND—HAMPTON COURT

ONE day going out of London on an excursion to Richmond, a suburb to the south-west, a matter of ten miles from the heart of the town, which is Charing Cross, I had got in the train at Waterloo, and gone with my ears full of the extraordinary din of the city, where at times the streets are literally blocked up with people and vehicles of every sort. There occurred to me general ideas of the activity and practical genius of the English; and, kept within myself by the rude monotony of the train, I went on making a digest of my indolent admiration, when by mere chance my view fell on an announcement which ran across the carriage from side to side in front of me—"Passengers are informed that this compartment is constructed to contain ten places, five on each side."

I woke up. Is this practical genius? Is this activity useful? Sixteen words when two are enough? On the Continent they write, "Ten places," and everybody understands that they are those of the compartment, that they have to be

halved between the two sides, and that the notice is intended for passengers. I then remembered the title of a comedy of Shakespeare, *Much Ado about Nothing*. All this people, in fact, agitates itself immensely, I will not say about nothing—that would be absurd—but about little, since the practical resultant of activity wanting in the superior direction of a rational or synthetic instinct is relatively small. The maxim, “time is money,” is a complete mistake, for no people lose more time owing to want of method.

They waste themselves uselessly ; not from indolence, for they are incessantly on the move ; but they waste themselves because they do not know how to use time intelligently. In the first place the effective day has not more than eight hours—from nine till five. Then the actual journeys in railway by the Underground, in omnibuses and cabs, use up whole hours. Then the eating : lunch alone takes up an hour at least. Take it altogether, the business-man in the City, who in fact leads the life of a dog, works reproductively only about four or five hours. The rest goes in travelling and ~~being~~ about, because he lives leagues off ; he goes about to his toilette and baths ; he goes about to eat, which is one of the hardest-worked duties, and in the evening he rests heavily in order to digest, with a tumbler of whisky-and-soda by his side, his eyes closed, his brain muddled. Such a way of understanding life is indeed singular.

I felt myself happy at not having been born an Englishman.

To consume my allotted fifty years of life in bustling about like a slave, earning money with which to fill my stomach more, in order to take a leading part in *soirées*, adorned in evening dress, appears to me absurd (I confess it timidly), absurd and little *practical*.

With this we had arrived at Richmond, and we got out of the train to breakfast at the Star and Garter. What an admirable panorama! The day was exceptionally fine, the atmosphere serenely blue; and from the magnificent terraces of the house the dark thickness of the trees rolled on down to the Thames with a noble grandeur that made me happy. It is true that the breakfast was excellent, and the appetite equal to it.

Of all the classic sites in the neighbourhood of London, Richmond—the favourite place of excursion of the Londoners—seems to me the most naturally beautiful, justifying the name—"Sheel"—it formerly bore. The present name comes from its having been chosen as a residence at the beginning of the sixteenth century by the founder of the dynasty of the Tudors, Henry VII., who was Duke of Richmond. And perhaps, also, it appeared beautiful to me for another reason, because it was the first time for many days that I saw myself free from the bustling excitement of the Carthaginian capital.

On the Sunday that I was at Hampton Court, further on beyond Kingston, also on the Thames, the case completely changed ; I found myself along with a party that went to see the palace, in a train full of people. They went gravely, like people going to fulfil a duty. No loose voice or laughter was heard. One could see that the people were going in families. It was Sunday, and the Lord's Day is not made for folly. The only perceptible thing was some restrained flirtation between the young people of the party. The elderly people stood still like storks—so that you could not tell whether they are asleep or on the watch—before the tiled walls crowned with towers and turrets, walls with a dark-red tone, over which the ivy climbs and spreads its green lace-work of sombre foliage.

At the entrance-gate printed notices in large letters request visitors to walk orderly and quietly. This request, on the other side the Channel, seems ridiculous or pleonastic. We entered the Clock Court ; and this side, together with that which bears the name of the builder of the palace, Cardinal Wolsey, are, like those of the south and west, in the Tudor style. The impression already acquired in London repeated itself here ; it is the national architecture ; it is that which suits the colour of the atmosphere and the surrounding landscape.

The want of symmetry of the main buildings, the repeated goings in and out, the towers stuck on

to the walls, slit with enormous windows, and the colour of the weather-beaten tiles—all this harmonises well with a nature at the same time bountiful and hostile. The propriety is felt of defence against a climate soaked in moisture, and designed for vegetation. This dwelling-place has something of the vegetable kingdom about it as well; it appears to be made of trunks of trees; it seems like a wood in the irregularity of the lines it makes in the air.

Within these walls life quickens with the almost tragic nature of this land. In this palace, which in order to maintain his own existence the minister had to give up to the king, Henry VIII., revelled in his orgies, and Cromwell in the fury of his ambition. Hampton Court calls up to my mind the horrid English tragedy, a leaven of blood and licentiousness at a feast of barbarians. And when I looked at the party of my quiet companions, heads up like cranes, I saw in their obtusely stolid faces some feline expressions, their thick jaw-murmuring guttural sounds, and I comprehended the possibility of a return to olden times, either along the road of a poverty perhaps somewhat improbable, or along the parallel road of the licence of wealth.

Hampton Court was one of the places in which I best learnt to understand England. And it was for that same reason that I did not see, so to speak, the gallery of pictures within the palace, which



was arranged after—in the time of James II.—it ceased to be a royal residence. I saw, however, Queen Anne's bed-chamber, like that of Louis XIV. at Versailles, and all the royal bed-chambers of the time when monarchs were ostentatiously theatrical in the scenes of their respective reigns. It is monotonous.

And with this impression I descended, and the excursionists along with me, on to the terrace of the fountain towards the gardens.

What a change, thank God! What singular insipidity! Here we are along with French classicisms, smooth surfaces, neat walks, tympana, cornices, arcades, symmetry, regularity, elements of an architecture which, even if it were perfect—and that it is far from being—alone harmonises with dry and limpid air, and bare and reddish soil. Here we are on the ground that bears on its shoulders, like an ideal head, the line of a colonnade on which rests the frontal triangle, well shown on the luminous background of sapphire-coloured sky.

My tragic England of a short time ago appeared to me a little overcharged. And then the crowd of visitors made lumps rise in my throat that I swallowed, when, immovable like cranes, they stared with imbecile wonderment, grunting from their chests: "Beautiful! magnificent!"

Turning away from the façade I went along the gardens, also constructed in the French style of Le Nôtre, because, on this side, Hampton Court is

an imitation of Versailles. There are the same rows of pilasters and statues ; the same geometrical arrangement, the same quadrangular or circular lakes, fish-ponds bordered with balustrades, against which cavaliers and dames, clothed in silk and powdered, played gallant madrigals. The garden is a saloon under the open sky, where one could walk and talk in company. But this one which is so French, which bears so much trace of the people that invented amicable life, how does it square with the Englishman, misanthropic because he has to live in a climate soaked with water ? How can one have company in the open air, if that open air is as unsociable as the spirit of these islanders ?

The answer is in the Tudor architecture, in which the palace is but the amplification of the cottage; or rather an aggregate of many cottages forming a mass : thus the garden, adapted to the *mind* and the climate of England, is the imitation of the wood, into which man enters alone with nature. And if the Tudor palaces are fine in their way, the English parks at times touch the limits of the marvellous. There is a particular instinct and taste in the design of the trees, turf, and flowers, with the almost natural lakes winding through gently undulating ground, with foot-paths branching tortuously through the midst of mysterious masses of verdure, where the lords lose themselves while flirting, or the lonely give themselves up to ruminating on their splenetic misanthropy.

It is so: this suits England, who shows her judgment in the decision in which she made an end of classic architecture, fit only for countries with plenty of light; and of French gardens, fit only for sociable people. For these strong and mystic men, inaccessible to idealism, the house is a fort, the garden is a wood, the town is an aggregation of houses. As the creative sun is wanting, so there is also wanting to the soul the unifying web of the general aspect of things in order to introduce harmony into its system, creating them anew, so to speak, as inventions of the thought. And because they have no sun the English cannot be either philosophers or artists: they have not got a spark of synthetic genius.

## IX

### SYDENHAM: A FESTIVAL—HURLINGHAM: A CLUB

ANOTHER of my excursions was to Sydenham to the Crystal Palace on the Monday Bank Holiday of the saint of commerce, one of the five or six that Sir John Lubbock got voted by Parliament for the benefit of clerks who want to amuse themselves. I went to Sydenham in a torrent of boys. It was a company, grossly merry, of faces already half way up the mast that marks the transition between children and men. They played in the carriage, pushing and pinching one another; they cried out and laughed with their mouths wide open; one could see that they had no sort of instinctive delicacy, so frequent among the Continental proletariat. They appeared to me young wild beasts let loose.

When this human wave flowed out into the great monster of iron and glass, within the building the torrent of people filled the air with the thunder of its noise, trotting about in thick masses along the naves and galleries of the awe-inspiring interior.

Behold here a genuine monument of our time, and the exact spectacle of the modern democracy. It can be disagreeable, it certainly is disagreeable, to the refined palate; but it is incontestably great, —very great in a sense—this assembly of hundreds of thousands of people. A big rough Englishman said to me with his eyes moist with delight: "One might live and die here, sir!" This phrase is to me a descriptive poem in itself.

Sydenham, in fact, is the popular temple of London. Here they live and enjoy life. Here they meet in the free community of all classes, the principle that lies at the foundation of civilisation. Here one sees a miniature of the whole world! All the best statuary of all times lines the galleries. All different kinds of architecture are here reproduced. There are Egyptian temples, Greek façades, Byzantine buildings. There is Pompeian, there are representations of the Italian type, of Gothic, Tudor, and Elizabethan; there is an Alhambra, with its Court of the Lions,—and all sorts of other monuments, and all life-size, within the gigantic coat of mail that raises itself like an ~~iron~~ vaulted sky to a height of fifty yards.

There are also gardens with real tropical trees; there are lakes; there are collections of different human races and stuffed animals; there are galleries in which can be seen copies of the best paintings; there are exhibitions of every imaginable thing, in a bewildering confusion of pretty flags,

flowers, and foliage, notices in all colours; and advertisements hung up; a terrible Capernaum, giving us the idea of the great dark confusion of the contemporary popular mind. "One might live and die here!"

And in the middle of this palace—of which the boundary measures two miles, the enclosure could hold a town, and the height would be a caution against anything higher—rises its immense dome, the duplicate of that of St. Paul's, which is the second in the world; and under the cupola in the centre the immense organ and the four thousand musicians of the Handel orchestra give forth in full voice "God save the Queen" in the midst of the hum, as of the universe, that the Palace gives out on all sides, through the hundreds of thousands of hands, feet, and mouths of the swarming population.

I shall probably never again have the opportunity of beholding a spectacle more colossal as a realisation of democracy, nor do I think that any such exists. One leaves it bewildered. And on going out nature appears more lovely. One would say we were recovering from a nightmare. The gardens are as magnificent as ever, the grass-plots inviting; and if there were not the great preparations for the evening's fireworks in front the panorama would be delightful without being quite new. The country is always the same, with the same colour, the same trees, and the

same monotony. From the fireworks I was free.

I do not, though, omit to see—rather the contrary—the spectacle of the fair that goes on all over the green in front of the terraces of the Palace in the full light of day. From the sides of the scaly whale of glass there run merry bands that eat, drink, and make tender love just as they like. On one side they dance jigs to a semi-savage accompaniment on the banjo, which is a guitar with a tambourine instead of a sounding-board, a rather hoarse instrument derived from the blacks in America. On another side bottles of drink are poured out and eating goes on: the ground is strewn with greasy papers. On another side, stretched at full length on the grass, side by side and in one another's arms, boys and girls, paired off together, are devouring themselves with kisses, laughing all the while. I never saw this by daytime in Portugal in the full light of the sun.

And behind me rises to the skies the immense dark monster of glass and iron, in scales over which the sun, already beginning to set, darts fiery rays. The crust of the whale trembles with a noise within like the war-cry of the Moors, and from stem to stern at the two extremities of the new cathedral of the Cockneys, the two Chinese towers of the Palace, with their coloured campaniles sparkling in the air, point upwards to the sky.

Indeed, I had a vision of a future Chinese

Europe, when democracies would all be civilised according to its standard ; and at parting I could not help praying for a plague upon Paxton, the inventor of the machine, all the more as they have put up to him a fearful bust, four times life-size, on an Egyptian pedestal, in the midst of the turf whereon the pairs rolled about kissing.

It is excusable, then, that I came back to London in bad humour to dress for dinner at the Hurlingham Club, to which I had been invited.

After an hour's drive by carriage, I arrived at the end of the long avenue that forms the continuation of Piccadilly. There was no stranger contrast than that between my morning and my evening. I leapt at a bound from a people's fair to a party of fine people.

Hurlingham is a sporting club, where they play polo in the middle of a park like all the other parks. In the early evening, when we arrived to dinner the shadows of the trees, scarcely distinguishable, were projected hazily, and the fields assumed to themselves curious yellowish tones. The twilight of this latitude during June almost completely suppresses the darkness of night. The day has hardly finished in the west when the dawn already begins to illuminate the east. The effects of the light in an air always more or less thick with moisture recall Rembrandt.

In one room, neat, but tastily furnished, we were probably some twenty persons, at two tables. We



ate that which is eaten, and in the way in which it is eaten, among civilised people, and washed all down with champagne in the English fashion. The friendliness was considerable, the company good, and the communication between neighbours complete. We were in equal numbers of ladies and gentlemen. An old military man was projecting a yachting cruise round the coasts of the Peninsula, and asked me questions about Vigo, Oporto, Figueira, and Lisbon. During the dinner we had white-bait, an obligatory dish at all suburban parties. The ladies talked about the "season" and the fashions, about Ellen Terry in *Henry VIII.*, and about dances; the men discussed the probability of Gladstone's victory over the Tories in the elections that were soon to be held. It was just what it could not help being everywhere. Civilised life reduces everything to a uniform type.

Afterwards we went into the tea-room, and then into the music-room, where they played some Hungarian *csardas*. What I saw did not modify my former notions. The Englishwoman, with her good constitution, has a rude unfeeling health that comes from her acquaintance with horsemanship and long country walks on foot. But, with some seductive exceptions, what happens to her skin, nose, and teeth is the consequence of her *home* mission. Married as a blonde and slim angel, at the end of ten years, and after having had as many

children, she becomes a stout matron, a lady very much like her own nose—which is not saying a little. Certainly such a rule has exceptions ; and those who move in society, whenever they can flee the consequences, know the way to avoid perils, and prolong their beauty at some sacrifice.

In spite of naturalness and good manners, the middle-class Englishman has something about him counterfeit and out of countenance, which it appears to me comes from the artificial character of his civilisation. If you scratch him you see the barbarian ; firstly on account of the limits of his comprehension of things, secondly by his constant pre-occupation as to the effect he produces. Show or appearances is in this people, who are the inventors of cant, an acquired instinct which reveals itself in the affectation of an eccentricity which was at one time genuine. The mania for spending and the luxury of spending money are also rooted in their subjective pride, and in the inevitable character of a mercantile civilisation in which the sovereign is God and poverty a dishonour. The great pre-occupation in both sexes is not to be vulgar. They have the *parvenu* instinct.

When I got back to the Savoy at night they were at supper in the coffee-room, profusely illuminated with the electric light, among palms stretching towards the roof of polished stucco, with walls and pilasters clothed half-way up with wainscoting of carved walnut, and further up with gilded

leather. At the little tables, each to seat four, round which the waiters gravely passed to and fro, there were two couples, the men in evening dress, the ladies with low dresses and brilliants. Champagne was being drunk. I have no wish to know if they were both ladies, but they certainly had a serious and self-contained manner. I could see that they were on view, which is entirely a different thing from amusement. Nevertheless, as there is no disputing about tastes, every one amuses himself as he can or as he pleases.

Between the day's outing at Sydenham and the supper at the Savoy my day was pretty well portioned out. London did all she could to make herself a merry place.

## X

### INSIDE A GENTLEMAN'S HOUSE

THE day dawned dark and rainy. The horizon from the window of my room did not measure two hundred yards. There had entered already, through the medium of a dark fog, the rolling noise of Charing Cross Bridge, over which the trains passed with a noise like dull thunder. The conversation of the previous evening at the Hurlingham Club came again to my memory, and I went on forming my judgment as to the singular character of the English. Two girls, who, by the way, did not belong to the class of beauties, had sat next to me at dinner. It is right to say in passing that in their fondness for classifying everything and putting everything in its proper rank, the English have created the institution, as it were, of professional beauties. When a lady acquires the reputation of official and consecrated beauty, she is safe to acquire a certain position in society. She has a profession. It is almost bad form not to recognise her, because one of the contradictory traces of the character of this people,

so self-conscious and subjective, is a profound submission to every established custom. They are Conservatives by blood. Formal docility corresponds to psychological self-consciousness. The professional beauty, consecrated through opinion, is as indisputable as the Queen or religion, two things in which the Englishman gives no quarter.

It is because in the matters of his faith and of the reality with which he invests his social pride the Englishman has, and with justice, a rooted vanity in the beauty of his women. It was one of the few sides through which I perceived the æsthetic sense penetrating the spirit of the race. Woman, who here is really worshipped as the Goddess of home and the enchanter of the fireside, is also considered as the most beautiful work of art of nature. And in their native pride the English, just as they admit no country to be better than their own island, and nothing to be better than what they possess, think also that the absolute type of feminine beauty was born here.

"Come and see the most beautiful woman in the world," hiccoughed a gentleman to me as I went up one Sunday after church to Hyde Park Corner.

And it is a singular circumstance, whereby the Englishman cloudily confounds his sentiments, that monarchy is for them feminine. Their two greatest monarchs have been women, Queen Elizabeth, whose days were of gold—the golden

days of good Queen Bess—and Queen Victoria, whose days are indeed those of the greatest dominion, of the greatest riches, and of the greatest power of England. And yet neither of these has been a professional beauty.

It was not this species of beauty that was passing through my mind ; it was the free mirth, the ingenuous simplicity, the candid merriment, with which the women, as soon as one had broken the ice of the first meeting, spoke to and conversed with us in a tone of freedom and want of restraint, at the same time avoiding double meanings, bad taste, and stilted affectation. There is a complete naturalness which evidently grows with years, condition, and estate ; from the timidity peculiar to the age which here terminates the limits of infancy, to the experience met with in old age. But the converse has this much of good, that it does not weary, because it is not that kind of duel in which women, feeling that they are heard, are always striving to captivate, and consider the drawing-room, in which they are the high priestesses, to be the stage of a theatre.

The dark weather that came over explained to me the pre-occupation of the English for *home*, and their science of domestic comfort, whence comes the interior character and psychology of their genius. What pantheists or idealists they have to be, when Nature is so insipidly adverse to them ! Among the fogs that surround them when they

cannot see a hand's length before their noses, what a communicative knowledge they possess of atmosphere and landscape ! So they gather themselves up within themselves, they contract themselves, they roll themselves up like snails in their shells. A house shut up, a good table that in the half-light of the dining-room is as resplendent as an altar of jasper ; children and family round about, flowers in their button-holes, the mother grave and serene, with servants behind in proper dress, the food strong and solid, good wines, plenty of flowers—is not this happiness ? They easily convince themselves that it is.

But as this condition is of artificial structure and they make civilisation consist in it, their mind does not halt there. After family and house they imagine fresh wants, a carriage well covered in against the cold, a convenient pew in church on Sunday ; then a seat in Parliament, and a safe place in heaven. And with this an infinity of indispensable things—complicated bath-rooms ; kitchens like laboratories ; delicate apparel ; lavatories bending under the weight of brushes, razors, scissors, mirrors, sponges, perfumes, and creams ; cupboards full of boots of different kinds for each moment of existence ; sticks for every kind of walk ; bags, portmanteaus, tweezers, waterproofs, blankets, rugs, binocular glasses, everything that is needful for the incessant voyages on which the Englishman, imagining he is obeying his sedentary

ideal, goes impelled by his irresistible nomadic instinct.

All this makes life dreadfully complicated : all this completely absorbs time ; and this complication and absorption, added to the money that so artificial a life costs, causes the genius of the people to sterilise itself in the indispensable necessity of earning much money, in order to spend much money, so as to imagine that it is enjoying the inalienable pleasures of fortune.

Remembering our own sober life, the simple and satisfied one of Southerners, I can only lament this singular illusion, this mist in which the spirit of my hosts labours, thicker even than the fog of to-day over the valley of the Thames.

Moreover, it is not only the slavery to the tangible externals of life, it is not only the mania for sumptuous convenience carried out even to tyranny ; it is not only these. There is yet another vice, rooted in the tradition and violent instincts of the race : it is gluttony, excited by the savouriness of a scientific cookery. The Southerner is greedy ! but the Englishman is a glutton in gluttony. Certainly the climate requires hot and strong nourishment. These are traditional, as I went to see them in the classic tavern of Simpson, the real one, in the Strand. They gave me a slice of meat swimming in fat, a piece fit for Pantagruel, cut out on the spot from a sanguinary heap carried about among the tables. It was



excellent, as well as a glass of frothing beer, but it gives one enough to eat for three days. The gentleman, however, takes this, a joint or its equivalent, soup before, and fish as well, and fruit afterwards, whisky and soda, or Rhine wine, coffee, and cheese. . . . And lunch! First at nine o'clock he takes his breakfast. After lunch he takes his tea and biscuits at five o'clock before his walk. Afterwards, at eight, he dines in style. At ten he takes tea again, and in the interval he drinks whisky and soda, American drinks, or claret, and eats biscuits; and yet he does not burst!

Here behold the ideal aspired to by two millions of people in this Babylon of London! To get enough money in order to, in full view of domestic comfort, waste a whole life in eating, and providing for the infinite futilities of a civilisation of show. I do not, however, admit that all this presents a web of incongruities, because, in fine, the love of the home is the greatest of the illusions. The organic restlessness of the Englishman causes domestic quiet alone to be of use for the purpose of eating and sleeping. The first proof of this statement, which may appear paradoxical, is in the clubs, where life is that of an exaggerated home.

I open the London Directory and encounter the list of a hundred clubs, with a population of more than a hundred thousand members, with

subscriptions of from one pound to forty, and dividends from ten shillings to fifteen pounds. These clubs include all classes: there are literary, scientific, and artistic; there are military and naval; there are political; there are university; there are sporting; there are commercial and banking; there are others without any peculiarity of class.

And what do the English do in the clubs? They take vengeance on domestic nuisance by digesting and sleeping in another nuisance; absorbing whisky and soda, lolling in large arm-chairs, irreproachably clad, shod, and combed, smoking cigarettes and holding converse in an exchange of monosyllables and hourly yawns with an invincible tedium. They are tired of the day, of the bath, of the toilette, of the food, genteel occupations, through which they carry on current affairs.

The only thing that wakes them up is some anecdote, the resource of people inaccessible to conversation properly so called. It is a case of sport, of food, of horses, or of women, often related with humour; that is the great condiment to people as out of balance psychologically as they are out of joint physically.

Above all they wake up from their usual somnolency when the project of a party, an excursion, or a voyage is discussed. Then, in the hope of satisfying the profound instinct of movement,

men and women prick up their ears like race-horses; they start up and come to life. The nomad appears, and soon they take down their portmanteaus, they fold up their rugs, they pack up their wrappers; and just see those who are going, lively and satisfied in the intimate expansion of their instinct, running about among country seats in the winter, or setting off for the Continent that they so unconsciously pretend to dislike; or going on board steamers for Egypt, the Cape, India, or Australia, on sporting excursions, or merely to while away the time.

And with all these contradictory inconsistencies the English, without having what is called "amiability" of manner, are profoundly captivating, polite, sincere, and open-dealing. It is because inconsistency, the origin of the affectation, and systematic posturing of their habits, is not an artifice brought about by reasoning; it is almost entirely a consequence of the conditions of life in which they meet one another.

It will be asked, moreover, how it is that such inconsistency yields such stupendous results, such contradiction produces so colossal an effect.

For three reasons. First, because they operate like an element, exporting annually two hundred thousand strong men disposed to the conquest of the earth. Second, because they have in their metropolis, through the bounty of Nature, the monopoly of coal and iron. Third, because being

the most disciplined and submissive people religiously and morally, they have formed a material idea of civilisation, and hence have given to money an indispensably sovereign charter.

On all these accounts, with the affirmative quality of their genius inaccessible to contemplation and to doubt, to speculation and to art, they have a conqueror's pride and an interior disdain for anything which is not English.

The words *Continental*, when they speak of Europeans, and *native* when they refer to inhabitants of other countries generally, and the word *foreigner* in general, like the Greeks when they spoke of *barbarians*: these three words, whatever better intention there may be, always in their mouths mark inferiority.

The English who reside on the Continent come down in value. They call them *Continental* Englishmen. And as to the value of the foreigner, J——, a Portuguese resident many years in England, told me an expressive anecdote.

A little boy, his son, born in England, and who unconsciously considered himself as good as the other little boys with whom he was playing, came crying and complaining to his father. "What have they done to you, boy?"—"They called me a foreigner."

## XI

### ST. PAUL'S—WESTMINSTER—BRITISH CITIZENSHIP

NOW I can happily give vent to my sincere desire for admiration, because on entering St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey, which are two pantheons, I have to bow before the greatness of this people, fated, like the Romans, to rule. *Tu regere imperio populos, Romane, memento!* The Romans also produced in the minds of the Greeks impressions like those which the strangeness of the English character produces in us Continentals; the Greeks also had to bow before the governing or imperial genius of the Romans, as we to-day have to recognise the eminent political qualities of that people which in its history recalls the Roman step by step.

Its heptarchy is like the legendary period of the kings of Rome; afterwards comes the history of its constitution, all the more because it is bound always to tradition on the one hand, and on the other because it progresses gradually and assimilates to itself neighbouring peoples, until it consolidates the political unity of the geographical

territory allotted to the nation. Then comes expansion and conquest, by the institution of the colonies. Then comes the duel with Napoleon, which recalls the wars with Hannibal; and the conquest of India, like that of the Africa of the Carthaginians. Then comes empire; and it is a sight to see with what pride the English of the present day use the words *Empire* and *Imperial*.

I certainly do not propose to myself now to enter upon a dissertation on the parallels between Roman and English history; this is only just about what I *felt* as I entered into St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey. It is as at Rome, the same sanctification of politics, the same popularisation of worship. The churches are pantheons. From this it can be seen that the people are not inaccessible to metaphysical sentiments; just in the same way that the Roman was not; but in this proper limit lies the secret of its force. In olden times religions, because the metaphysical spirit did not quite detach itself from elementary notions, were a part of the constitution, and the Church was a part of the State, and devotion an aspect of patriotism. In modern times the case has been different since the institution of Catholicism created a heavenly kingdom for souls, and the Kingdom of God retired from this world. The divorce of politics from religion is in Europe an accomplished fact ever since the appearance of Catholic Christianity. The religious revolution of Protestantism in the

sixteenth century, nationalising the Protestant Churches, modified this state of things in the bosom of the Germanic race, but in spite of it, in part of the Continent, neither among Catholics nor among Protestants has this regression gone as far as to reach the old sentiment as in England, for the very reason that no people is, like the English, so little susceptible of metaphysical views or of enthusiasm that can properly be called pious.

St. Paul's, arising from the high ground in the middle of the city, was already a sacred place in the time of the Romans. The dome and the columns that sustain it are the model of that classic London of the eighteenth century which has several times provoked our distaste. The nobility of the lines, the grandeur of the building, black as everything is under a sky also black and low, instead of raising the spirit offend it. People remember that this imitation of St. Peter's at Rome was built at the expense of a tax imposed on coal from the mines—and of coal they appear indeed, façades, tympana, columns, frieses, dome, peristyles, and even the statue of Queen Anne, who is in front of the entrance, there being at her feet England, France, Ireland, and America. The Empire of the Britains was already formidable in the eighteenth century, even before the epic moment of Waterloo, which was like Zama.

And when one enters the immense nave, one sees the conquering history of the English written

on statues and monuments, stretched along the walls and in the open chapels. Here are the generals who fought the battles on the Continent and beyond the sea, presided over by Wellington, the "Iron Duke," conqueror of Napoleon. There are the heroic Napiers, Ponsonby, and Picton, Heathfield and Moore, Abercromby and Brock; and in a chapel apart the monument of the heroes of Balaclava in the Crimean war. The sailors have Nelson in their front, with Howe, Duncan, Rodney, Collingwood, St. Vincent, who is, as he is called, our Napier, victor in the battle of Cape St. Vincent. Then the Bishops, Jackson and Blomfield, of the see of London, and Middleton, who was the first Protestant Metropolitan of the Indies. And although letters, sciences, and arts have their temple at Westminster, Hallam the mediæval historian, Johnson the lexicographer, Jones the Orientalist, Donne the poet, Turner and Reynolds the painters, Cooper the surgeon—all these and many others have here their consecrated places, like the household gods of a nation, in the interior of a temple erected for prayer.

At Westminster the most honourable place is reserved for statesmen. In the open space in front of the Abbey they have raised a statue to Beaconsfield. On the base they have placed an inscription: "Ever remembered for devotion to his Queen and the honour of his country." These simple words, in which, moreover, the English imperial genius



breathes, are indeed solemn. The honour of the country is symbolised in the court of the monarch.

Within the sombre nave are Chatham and Pitt, Canning, Fox, Peel, Palmerston, Blair, Baine, Cavendish, Castlereagh, Cobden, Warren Hastings, Buxton, Russell; all—and Disraeli again, the whole pleiad of statesmen who raised the incomparable monument of British Empire. They are on foot in attitudes of action, speaking, writing, giving directions, surrounded by symbolic attributes fitted to recall in the minds of the people the memory of their deeds and gratitude for their services. By the side of those who governed there is shown devotion to those who instructed and enchanted the English people. Newton is by the side of Darwin, Herschell, and Stevenson, the constructor of the railways; Handel, the musician, is by the side of Garrick, the actor; Macaulay, Mackintosh, Grote, and Thirlwall, the historians, are matched with Goldsmith, Thackeray, and Dickens; and Shakespeare presides over the pleiad of sublime poets who have made in the language what Nature made in the skin, hair, and eyes of the English maidens, the enchantment of subjective poetry. And Thomson, Dryden, Southey, Coleridge, Campbell, Addison, Burns, and Sheridan are all there, and they form a goodly number.

The people who among moderns have restored in this way the ancient worship of great men, and not through classic imitation but on account of a

living and spontaneous instinct, the revealer of its imperial genius—this people could not forget the worship due to a race of heroes that only flourish here. They are the philanthropists: St. Paul's holds the monument to Howard; Westminster that to Wilberforce, the preacher of the abolition of colonial slavery. In the two temples it is, therefore, easy to recall all the phases of the history of the English people, and all the aspects of their collective character. So much the more as at Westminster the chapels are filled with the aristocratic tombs of mediæval England, narrating the dark and determined bloodshed that has marked the inner life of this people, destined to build up the greatest empire the world has ever seen.

Thus at Westminster the past is linked with the present; and St. Paul's comes in between to tell us the connecting story of the voyages and conquests, of the wars and expeditions. What matters it, then, that the statues may be mediocre and at times grotesque? The epic impression is so strong that it subordinates the artistic sense. Moreover, the Greeks laughed at the Roman statues and the colossal temples of the city of the Tiber.

•St. Paul's is indeed of *coal*, but Westminster is not; darkness does not hurt that style of architecture. Lofty windows between tall pilasters terminating aloft, baldacchinos and niches with carved statues, ivy and woodbine encircling the

pillars; all the old superfluity of the Gothic, surrounded by large plots of fresh and green turf, unites naturally with the climate, and evokes harmonious impressions, causing to rise up before you in life the annals of a people that at the present moment is just at the height of its greatness. Either I was little open to artistic impressions, or the spectacle of the English sight filled me with wonder: the truth is that the designs of many of the figures of the heroes did not offend me very much. One must say, then, that latterly there is evident progress in taste.

The ornamental arts have gained immensely by the teaching afforded by the schools at the South Kensington Museum. Also in that quarter the inspection of monuments is instructive; the dates are arranged so as to show the education of the æsthetic mind, or rather the technico-artistic.

St. Paul's for some time to come must gain by the innovations being introduced into the interior, by filling up the plain surfaces of the roofs and walls with mosaics and many-coloured pictures in imitation of the Byzantine.

At the same time they are placing stained-glass in the windows, but this ornamentation, so beautifully adapted to certain churches, is unpleasing in classical temples.

## XII

### RELIGIONS

AND the stained glass windows seem all the more absurd, as the revolution through which the Anglican Church is passing approximates to the Catholic religion even so far as to be an imitation of Rome, as is St. Paul's. You see there an altar absolutely Catholic : frontal, cross, super-altar, with candlesticks and candles. This sectarian movement is called *Ritualism*; and with the restored ritual St. Paul's, adorned with mosaics and gilded, will be magnificent.

Will it be *English*? There are different sides to this question. Because, without entering into the mind of Protestantism, the fact is that the genius of this people dislikes the ceremonial and pantheistic idea constructed out of the religion of the South, where nature is communicative. It is true that English Protestantism, through the way in which it was made, by the King making the most of the religious tendencies of his people in order to satisfy the caprices of his gross nature, and it is true that the English Church as well,

always possessed a different character from German Protestantism.

In the first place it was richer; it had the old wealth of the Catholic Church, rich endowments and a considerable staff of clergy. Even to-day the English Church, in spite of suffering so much from the organic vice of English society, a great poverty at the base of its parishes, has a majestic wealth as its vertex in the shape of its bishoprics; even to-day its rents, grants, endowments, and collections make up more than seven millions sterling, of which less than five form the endowment of the fourteen thousand parishes distributed over England and Wales. Two millions and a half constitute the revenues of the archbishops, bishops, collegiate churches, etc. There is nothing more wrong-sided in the mystic spirit of Protestantism than the institution of an aristocratic Church like the official English one. On this account there is one view of it to be seen in an exceptional confusion of rites, doctrines, and sects that progresses at the same rate as Ritualistic tendencies. The commotion of the Reformation shook and threw down the ecclesiastical authority of Catholicism by crushing the monastic orders.

The registers acknowledge in England and Wales, 34,467 places of worship, and of these the official Church does not possess more than 14,077. They mention twenty-six Protestant communities, and seven which are not so. Among these last

that which has the most chapels, is that of the Latter Day Saints, who have 222, without counting the Roman Catholics, who have 570. The Catholic Apostolic have 32, the Jews 53, the Greeks 3, the Italian and the German Catholics 1 each. There are altogether 882 churches that are not Protestant. Of the 19,508 Protestant but not of the Established Church, the most numerous are the Methodists, whose nine sects come in for 11,944 chapels. Then we see the Independents with 3244, then the six sects of Baptists with 2789, then the Unitarians with 229, then the Scotch Presbyterians with 160, then the Moravians, Sandemanians, Lutherans, Reformed Church, Germans and Dutch, the French Protestants, the Society of Friends, the New Church, and yet others; and in fine, 539 chapels in which the more scattered congregations meet.

To sum up, these sects, refractory to the authority of the Established Church, represent the spontaneous reaction of the independent spirit of mystic piety, a reaction which is even seen in the bosom of the actual official religion itself. Observation of rural life is on that account even more suggestive than in the towns.

As a rule, there are two ministers in each parish, one of the Established Church and one Dissenter. They are at cross-purposes. They live in different spheres, and exercise influences in different ways. Usually the Churchman is a gentleman by birth, often on friendly terms with the squire of the

neighbourhood, and has been at Cambridge or Oxford ; on all these accounts he has the preference in society. The other is, as a general rule, of the people, but as far as courage, truthfulness, benevolence, and general character go, he is also a gentleman according to rule. In England a *gentleman* is made up of all that comes up to the standard of dignity established for the morals and the forms of life ; but the *gentleman-making gentleman* must have money as well, and good birth even more. He cannot be a gentleman without qualifications of manner, but he is a good deal more of a gentleman if he has plenty of money, and still more if he comes of a good family. The poor man may, indeed, be a gentleman, but this word has a meaning of its own in the person of a landlord who lives abundantly on his rents.

The English clergyman depends entirely on the gentry of the neighbourhood. From the university he has brought a passion for athletics : cricket and football have a secretary in him. The parish clergyman as a sportsman, a hunter of foxes and hares, is now less common than he was ; but he is always a man in sympathy with this kind of sport. He is a Tory, like a man who knows himself to be of consequence. The Dissenter is totally different. Instead of dining with the squire, he goes to tea at the tenant's. Instead of being a guest in society, he frequents the company of the poor and small, the *ungenteel* people. His congregation, like all

the other things, is poorer than the lords of the parish church. He is naturally almost always a harsh and aggressive Radical, who above all things longs for the disestablishment of the official Church. He is no worshipper of the game laws, because he is no sportsman, and he lives in chronic hostility with his nightmare the Rector.

Generally speaking, the *clergymen* are less scrupulous in the fulfilment of their pastoral duties than the dissenting ministers, who have got to keep their congregations together or go without bread. In the meanwhile all agree that indifference in religious matters is growing up everywhere, so that disestablishment, the great cure-all for which so many hope, when it does come will certainly not turn in the direction of benefit to the Dissenting ministers.

This information, which I got from the mouth of a person worthy of belief, has to be distilled for the use of the Latin races. For this religious indifference, as my informant called it, we should call *carolismo eccessivo*. And to see a Sunday in London!—the English, who are always trying to get at facts and numbers, to make statistics of everything, find that attendance at places of worship of all kinds exceeds 7,000,000 of faithful among a population of 29,000,000. Deduct children and old people, and let him say, whoever he may be, whether there is a Catholic country where such a proportion can be seen.



It is probable that there is no man, whatever his sect may be, who is more conditionally religious than the Englishman. The deepest root in his moral character is respect. The Englishman worships by instinct, and in this consists the very nerve of his whole strength. He venerates everything as if he means it, and so when his idol walks off it destroys his energy. In no part of the world has the saying that religion is a bridle more incontestable truth.

There is no man more submissive or more subject to the admiring and timorous awe out of which religions have sprung. This race, bodily energetic and resolute like no other, is morally childish. Wonder and awe before questions unfathomable to the Englishman make him subservient, and establish the base of his mental discipline. In other races there is not to be found such respect for tradition, or worship of established forms, or admiration for great men, all the social traces that lessen the individual carat of genius, and so cement with solidity the whole mass of the greatness of the people. The English, who are penetrated by the Rationalistic civilisation of the Continent, principally of German origin, confess that intellectual cowardice is the only kind of cowardice possible for Englishmen, but that it lays hold of them to an excessive degree.

A popular orator said the other day: "I can attack whatever comes into my head except the

Queen and Christianity ; if I were to speak against these the public would stone me." At the present time things have changed a good deal. However, it is even yet difficult for an unbeliever to pass as a gentleman, a good Englishman, and an honoured man. Hence comes a custom that, without being positively a vice, is coated with hypocrisy—*cant*, the ritual of indestructible conventionality. Hence also is derived, as an opposite quality, also with its own rules, *humour*, the bitter caustic irony of a Swift or a Thackeray ; and independent of all rules arose also here the satanic and outspoken protest of a Byron.

At the slightest oath the Englishwoman lowers her eyes and blushes, murmuring "Shocking !" But double-meaning carries a passport, and at times crosses the frontier. It is that morality is formed of *cant* and conventionality, just as religion is made up of pharisaism. Both easily slide into hypocrisy. Taken out of his shell, the Englishman alone recognises the violence of the carnal temperament and the vague terror of the unknown. Hence, in the same measure as irreligion grows and customs naturalise themselves, there grows also the wave of supernaturalism to such an extent that it may end in overwhelming this people as it did the Romans.

### XIII

#### THE VICAR OF BRAY AND HENRY VIII.

THE *Vicar of Bray*, an English comic opera that I saw one evening at the Savoy Theatre, gave me the impression that the old days of English Puritanism were indeed gone by. This performance, of which the artistic value was above the average, is valuable on account of being genuinely English in spite of its obedience to the models of the French *opéra bouffe*. It must be worth something on account of having run several hundred nights. In spite of the heat the theatre was crowded. The clergyman is on the stage; the ecclesiastical costumes are changed, singing going on all the while. It is a rural parish of the kind I mentioned before. The rector is a widower; he is also a broad-shouldered man in the vigour of his age. He has opposite him a school for girls and a training college for clergymen. All is *Low Church*. But there is a rich widow in the parish, and the rector having marriage with her in his eye in order to raise his station in society, resolves to exchange into *High Church*. The wedding is about to take

place when it is discovered that, according to the rules of Ritualism, clergymen can only marry once. Then the parson, with the consent of the widow, changes to *Low Church*, and the wedding takes place, all the young ecclesiastical candidates marrying all the school-girls at the same time.

The mere relation of this is insipid, and I do not attempt to discuss the question as to whether the piece would have much effect on Continental palates. I only mention it as a sample of the change of custom. The whole theatre bursts into noisy roars at each one of the equivocal or openly improper scenes between the lines of more than indiscreet dialogue. And all this goes on at the church door among clergymen gravely clothed in black in long black coats without bands, with white neckties when they are Low Church, and close collars like Catholics when they are High. It seems to me that in no Continental country would the police allow a similar ecclesiastical farce. And yet Continentals are less religious than the English.

Is this a contradiction? No! It is that the Englishman, as soon as he begins to lose respect, takes the bit in his teeth like a runaway horse. Thus our critical and tolerant indifference, capable of respecting even where we do not believe, in accordance with obedience to the metaphysical idea of order and out of consideration for one's neighbour, would make no progress with the solid

and thorough-going Englishman, who must either submissively venerate or violently destroy.

Latterly in Paris the police closed a restaurant arranged like a convent, where the waitresses were habited like nuns. In Paris, too, in spite of the bad reputation of the place, they would never allow jigs and can-cans to be danced by lively clergymen and school-girls with an alacrity more than free. In London, however, this operetta was on the stage in a fashionable theatre for ten months with overflowing houses, and was taking the public by storm. And in Paris, the modern Corinth, the piquant spectacles are more especially for foreigners in search of amusement, at the same time when in London such a thing does not exist, the popular audiences being exclusively British.

Nor would other audiences understand how lively parsons and girls could finish up this two-act farce by a general wedding blessed by the rector of the operetta. Was it then that the audience burst with laughter? Here, no! At this they did not laugh; and since all finished according to the rules of *cant*, the society ladies and the most circumspect men were able to be present at scenes of considerable licence, and to listen to the spiciest double meanings. As well as I can judge, the explanation of this paradox, at which I was puzzled, is the following. Dame Nature worries the religious conscience, and the days of Puritanism have gone by; but this does not mean that the people must

turn irreligious, because that would require a mental condition that the Englishman does not possess. The religion of the future, taking a fresh dip into superstition, is spiritualism, which grows side by side with the nature of customs. London is, in fact, as my friend said to me, an Oriental city, Babylon or Nineveh.

On the other hand, if the Church is on the eve of a crisis, it is not so with the family, which is the real basis of the social fabric; and on this account *cant* would never allow the piece to finish with those irregular unions so common on the Continent. Men and women can only be united by marriage. This is what *cant* directs, but it does not mean that it is so in reality. All this is to save appearances and guard conventionalities. English morals rest upon a system of equivocations sometimes hard for us to understand; and these equivocations proceed from the sort of mind the people possess, foggy like the sky. They are people that have caught cold all over, to use my friend's expression. Everything is hoarse, the voices and the thoughts.

One proof of this is that there does not exist any comedy properly so called, because there is no possibility of grace and airiness when the mental state is confused. Comedy becomes farce; and farce becomes in its turn pantomime. There appear monstrous spectacles for children. The grotesque antics and blows, the bawlings and

stammerings of the clowns, and the black masks and carnival dresses of the harlequins, which should cause a bitter smile or tedious boredom, alone produce laughter. And this is their *humour*.

One evening, after a sumptuous dinner at a wealthy house, they took me in a comfortable carriage to a little fashionable theatre to pass an hour before returning to finish the evening with legions of drinks and ices, syrups, sodas, sherry, cordials, whiskies, out of cut glasses served on silver salvers, and with cigars such as are smoked in London alone. The theatre proper for stomachs overloaded with the colossal task of continual digestion, is not comedy, which requires the head to be kept clear and the mind on the alert. It is the dance and the pantomime, which regale the eyes without fatiguing the brain, and provoke roars of laughter which are good for digestion.

Every actress here has to be a dancer, because there is no piece without intermingled dance and dialogue. And the dances are always accompanied with effects of rapidly changing coloured light. The physical pleasure oppresses the intellectual in every detail. The *mise-en-scène* is absorbing. Nobody hears what is said. The only thing is what is seen. And what we saw this evening at the Court Theatre, and what is seen every evening at all the theatres, and in the great scene at the Empire, is either a magnificent ballet or a pantomime or farce, and the deification of an

auburn-haired woman in clouds of gold and silver gauze, clothed with the electric light, and bathed in blue or red. The feelings are excited, the digestion quickened, and the strong nerves of an athletic people titillated, vibrating with excitement in the open spectacle of a material paradise such as opened itself up to me under another aspect when on the way from Southampton I saw the oxen drowsily grazing on the pastures.

Everywhere there was sung or masticated the cant song of the day—

“Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay.”

When I went to the Lyceum to see Shakespear's *Henry VIII.* represented in masterly style by Irving and Ellen Terry, who in her incomparable rendering of Queen Katharine even exceeds that of Cardinal Wolsey; when I found myself in presence of that England of the sixteenth century that was so totally given up to Dame Nature, beautiful in the freedom of expansion of every animal passion, painted by the greatest searcher into the human soul that ever existed; when I saw the astute ambition of the one and the carnal sensuality of the other, vain ostentation, sanguinary ferocity, and perverted sincerity; and in and out through the whole orgie the noble grandeur and august dignity of the Aragonese queen, who seemed to me a human being cast into a cave of wild beasts, many thoughts rose up before me, but one



of them certainly was of pride at having been born in noble Spain.

Perhaps that was why I thought that nobody acted like Ellen Terry.

But in presence of *Henry VIII.* I perceived whither, now that the doctrinal period of Puritanism is over, England is now drifting. Merry England is returning to the moral condition of the sixteenth century, with the refinements and complications of three centuries of civilisation. When she gets there then she will write some more comedies like the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, because the English genius will be met with cast in fit moral moulds without the fetters that bind and deform it, turning it into incoherent equivocation. The hair-shirt of asceticism does not fit it; and it does not agree with light and airy Gallicism. In the one case it is counterfeit, and in the other ridiculous. It affects the German, but this cordial is too heady for it.

Several times I went to Richter's concerts at St. James's Hall, where the best orchestra in the world executes Schumann and Brahms. The hall is always full, a thing of no great wonder in a city of five million inhabitants; but still there is some taste of the *Derby* there; or if you like it, of a good farce! In St. James's Hall itself Schumann has to take turns with the *Minstrels*.

## XIV

### PAINTERS

WHEN I went one morning up the steps of the terrace in Trafalgar Square to visit the National Gallery, I had been the evening before to a loan exhibition of pictures then open gratis to the public at the Mansion House. Inside the court of the City, which shows an allegorical frontal above a row of dark Corinthian columns, I had the opportunity of seeing the new English style of painting, which has Rossetti for its founder and Millais for its principal representative.

The Victorian age, as the English proudly call the present one, comparing it with the age of Pericles or of Augustus, has its own architecture, a renewal of the Tudor, and has also its own painting, an imitation of the Italian pre-Raphaelites, whose most conspicuous representative is Perugino. The want of perspective, the femininity of the principles, the vapoury style of the compositions, the ingenuous and priestly air of the figures, the sobriety of the tones, the archaism of the accessories and ornamentation, were, it appeared to me,

the principal traits of the kind of painting that also introduced itself into France. On the other side the Channel the acceptance is explained by the tendency shown by refined art to slide into the Japanese, that is to say, into a peculiar combination of affected naturalism with extravagant fancy. Here, however, the appearance of pre-Raphaelitism is connected with deeper roots. The Madonnas of Rossetti and of Millais are the pictorial expression of the English ideal of women, as the poetical genius of the race, Shakespeare, sang her. There are Desdemona and Ophelia, there are the airy and fair-haired maidens, like Juliet seated on the Elizabethan balcony, warbling with Romeo her love duet. There are no more lyric hearts than those of this positive race, whatever be the degree of stilted and conventional affectation that they introduce into "genteel" sentiments.

"Genteel" is an adjective much abused on this side the Channel, as "joli" is on the other. The two adjectives picture the two people. Pre-Raphaelitism is "genteel." It is painting spiritualised archaically, before which the auburn *misses* come and idealise the type they consider to represent in the world the combination of candour and enchantment, behind which, and away from the sphere of art, lies the reality of life, almost always cruel, in which the English mother almost always shows her strongest points. Then this separation between the dominion of art and that of reality is

that which appeared to me to turn modern English painting into an artificial and modish kind for the use of a fashionable people.

Leaving, then, the pre-Raphaelitism of the Mansion House, what I went to see at the National Gallery was not the best collection of the Continental schools, but that of English painting: Reynolds, Gainsborough, Landseer, Hogarth, and Turner. Of pre-Raphaelites I had seen enough. When the English lyre of the Victorian age produced poems like *Aurora Leigh* by Elizabeth Browning, I do not want painters to make me understand it. And indeed in this subjective race poetry vibrates more than the plastic arts. If there is no vivid and permanent connection with ambient nature, if relationship is necessarily artificial and counterfeit, how can it have plastic art worthy to express the feeling of the people?

In England there are painters, but not painting. Lely and Kneller come from Van Dyck. Gainsborough and Reynolds, in painting landscape, possess the vivid colour and fresh feeling of the Flemish. What then can I find, what native garb shows itself in the rooms of the National Gallery? There are indeed painters genuinely English—Turner and Hogarth.

The room in which the pictures of the first are collected produced in me a deep impression. They are visions, they are hallucinations, like the Destruction of Sodom, deliriums of discordant

imagination, skies fantastically unreal, seas whirled by cyclones, auroras, storms, giddiness, sudden lights, fearful contrasts; a huge symphony of chaos traced with the brush that painted for an orgie of the elements what the brush of Rubens did for luxuriance of flesh. And from the canvas that presented me with frenzy bordering on insanity, there then came prominently forth one conspicuous idea—the sea. Both these marks are English—unbalanced and unrestrained imagination, and a passion for the sea. The proof, moreover, that these two expressions of fancy do not follow the requirements of art, is that the master has had no followers. An imitation of Flemish painting (there is no English painting properly so called) it remained alone, undoubtedly interesting to a high degree, but nevertheless without being imitated itself.

The other painter that most attracts the attention of the would-be student of the English school is Hogarth.

That also is genuinely national which expresses on canvas the creative genius of the *Book of Snobs* and the *Letters of Peter Plymley*, two works of humour of the first order. There is nothing more decidedly English than this. There is no richer vein of expression than that worked by the pens of Swift, Fielding, Sterne, Thackeray, and Dickens, and by the pencil of Hogarth. But these intentional compositions, in which reason decks itself

in the garments of folly, or on the other hand folly appears clothed and in its right mind, will they always be painting in the highest sense of the word? Will these pictures, acid as vinegar, painted in sadness and anger, in which the man, setting himself up as a critic, acts the part of a judge instead of moving in accordance with the expansion of the nature around him, always be art? Can caricature become art? Can the painter be a moralist? As for myself the answers are obvious, and show in the second of the genuinely English painters the incapacity of the race to create a school of painting.

The English are subjective, and here is the great advantage of humour properly so-called, because this intentional form of irony is an evidence of strength of character. *Humour* is the irony of the censor. But there is nothing so likely to harm the artistic temperament as the attempt to work out some kind of moral. There is no people that so frankly and freely recognises, confesses, and chastises its own proper defects as the English, whose literature is from first to last saturated with the spirit of condemnation of *snobism*, subserviency, *cant*, and the love of money, whether in greed of gain or pride of show.

Reacting on themselves, the English humorists and moralists, preaching or laughing bitterly, condemn the prominent features of their own moral nature; hence the singular impression they produce

on those who observe them from the outside. How can these men, always with their minds dominated with the moral side of things, be artists?

Is it now necessary to remark that there are superior pictures in the National Gallery? Are the portraits by Reynolds and Gainsborough at times marvels? Are Landseer's animals alive? Have the pictures of Rossetti founded a constellation of painters? I believe not.

And the proof that the art of painting has assumed considerable proportions in England lies in the 2007 works of art (unhappily of very unequal value) exposed this year in the rooms of the Royal Academy, which I also visited in discharge of the duties of conscience, and where I observed the learned reconstruction by Alma Tadema, and the "Halcyon Weather" of Millais, a piece of vapoury pre-Raphaelitism, midway between the equally vapoury pieces of Leighton and Leslie.

## XV

### THE BRITISH MUSEUM—ENGLISH INTELLIGENCE

I AM now going to do penance for the heresies I perhaps professed on the subject of English painting, by proclaiming aloud my enthusiastic admiration before the splendid building called the British Museum.

There is certainly nowhere in the world a larger or richer collection of the conquests and instruments of historical knowledge. If at the entrance to the massive porch, brought heavily forward in three bodies on a gigantic Doric colonnade, I was already full of the universal testimony to the merit of the British Museum, on going out I came away astonished at the collection of wonders that reminded me of the colossal libraries of the Alexandria Serapeum.

Going through the immense halls, where we saw and almost touched the monuments of extinct civilisation, it seemed to me that we were living among the Accadians and the Assyrians in Nineveh in the court of Sennacherib, of Assur-bani-pal, or of Nimrod, glancing over the tiles of the imperial



library, in which the chronicles of the period present characters evidently indecipherable. I saw on the walls mosaics and frescoes of singular composition, in which men, so different from ourselves, appeared to come from another planet, wakened from the sleep of an unknown past by the fortunate hand of chance.

Then I found myself on the opposite side of the Red Sea in the Egypt of the Pharaohs. The sphinxes, the winged lions, the sacred scarabæi, Apis, and the mummies wrapped in bandages according to rite, in their sarcophagi crowded with symbols and hieroglyphics, transported me to a world singularly stupefying, because instead of breathing for life, I went along in mere existence wrapped up in a dream of death. And when my eyes alighted on the place where the Rosetta stone is I was in a state of surprise at the trifling incidents on which the bulk of human knowledge depends; because if the French had not brought from Egypt this text in which the hieroglyphic inscription is translated into Greek, probably the interpretations of the symbolic language of the Nile of the Pharaohs would be up to the present day as subject to uncertainty as the tiles of the library of Accad disinterred by Layard. This little stone that the visitor passes without a second look, astonished at the population of monsters that inhabits the rooms, is nevertheless the key that opens the sacred gates of the temple of knowledge,

enabling us at the present day to read the Egyptian monuments as if they were written in our own tongues.

Then emerged funereal mansions toward the triumphal room, where the mutilated remains of the frieze of the Parthenon sing a Greek hymn vibrating with active and glorious life. It made me want to clap my hands; I found myself alive again. And in spite of the barbarity with which Lord Elgin treated these divine stones, I could not refrain from blessing the memory of the vandal lord that permitted me to enjoy some moments of pure delight at beauty.

But I do not want, nor do I know how, to relate all that the British Museum contains: I did not go there to study. I went to see and to imbibe impressions that were filling my head and setting me already in a whirl, when I betook myself to the reading-room.

It is worth the trouble to halt for an instant. It is an enormous rotunda surmounted by a cathedral dome greater than St. Paul's. Ample windows at the curve of the vault abundantly illuminate the room, which has four hundred convenient seats for readers. In the centre, at a vast circular table, are the librarians; around in shelves at a convenient height is the catalogue, itself consisting of two thousand volumes. Radiating from the centre are the seats for the readers, and against the walls are twenty thousand books of reference,

aids to work such as dictionaries, reviews, atlases, guides, tabular statements, etc. The library, disposed in rooms without end, contains a million and a half of volumes. The books in the reading-room can be consulted without formality; those in the library are obtained by written requisitions on printed forms, on which the classification in the catalogue has to be noted. It is not necessary to speak, and silence reigns absolute.

In order and method it is perfect. As to its richness in books I wanted to have a proof by seeing if my own works were there, and I found them all in the catalogue. When this happens in a language almost unknown, what must happen in those that are better known?

The yearly acquisition amounts to thirty thousand volumes; and as the library is not open to the public, although it is easy to get permission to go there to study, the tables are not occupied by idlers who go to kill time and to read all sorts of dubious books. For that the circulating libraries nourish the appetite for novels, the type of English imagination, at the cost of a sovereign a year.

Not here: here people study. And the amount of the subsidy and the abundance of materials for work afford the Englishman the means of satisfying the thirst for knowledge that he so often confounds with real science.

There is, moreover, a radical difference between the intellectual process of the Englishman and

that of the Continental. We understand things deductively through classification and abstraction. They assimilate things by committing them to memory, building up examples, piling up facts, assembling and comparing innumerable accounts.

Their method is inductive, and if names like Lecky, Latham, and Spencer, speaking only of living examples, are the proof of the extent of success of the English method, these names only, and especially that of Spencer, are also the proof of the comprehensive limits of such a method among those who are best able to make use of it.

This is not the place for a dissertation on modes of thought ; on this account I make but a passing mention of it. For those who understand the subject it is sufficient ; for those who do not, it would be necessary to enter into uninteresting details. Those who do understand will also have already understood how a people mentally organised as I have tried to show this one is, cannot present the intellectual results so successful in thinking minds, either through the power of abstract reason or that of æsthetic instinct. The Englishman is neither rationalist nor artist. His greatest authorities are empirical ; his greatest writers, like Grote or Gladstone, are sectarians incapable of objective history like Ranke or Mommsen. In mathematics, the touchstone of the reasoning capacity of a people, they look exclusively at formulæ. Euclid, learned by heart and recited, is still the master of the

schools, which produce scarcely any calculators. The teaching is practical or empirical ; hence the inferiority of the English as builders. Any architect of a Continental school can show these people, who are full of practical experience but are irrational, that they are in the wrong. And at the same time the very deep influence that England has been drawing for some twenty years from Germany, principally in intellectual matters, has produced visible results. The best German books are almost invariably published simultaneously by being translated at once into English. Ranke, Mommsen, and Duncker are in all hands ; Tiele, Grimm, Peschell, Goldziher, and many more, are read like native authors. The proper Saxon reaction, proclaimed by Swinburne, must be combined in this movement of the widening of the intellectual horizon, a movement that has already produced eminent men, originally superior owing to the clearness of their thought—I mean Maine and Freeman.

Nevertheless, these men are at the present hour exceptional. The fetish of *practice*, worshipped in English knowledge, causes speculation to be an exceptional thing. The wisdom of the priest or lawyer is not up to the standard of that society, principally mercantile and noisily utilitarian. Knowledge is valued for what she fetches. The wise man, as a rule, at the present time, is the merchant who explores the pecuniary results of the

latest discoveries. Edison, although an American, is profoundly English. Or again the learned man is an amateur, a banker like Sir John Lubbock, who gives up his leisure hours to palæontology. These superior types of the intellectual class, independent of any notion of gain, types that my memory realises in Pasteur in France and Helmholtz in Germany, savants who might have had more money than any modern Croesus, this Augustan flower of thought is in vain to be sought for in Carthaginian England. It is one more consequence of the want of ability for conception of the abstract and beautiful.

Unable to climb to the greatest heights of thought and art, the English, however, with their incomparable wealth, with their venerable seriousness, and with the decided energy that they place in everything they go after, recognising the deplorable depths into which taste descended in the first half of the century, decided to renovate it at least in building, furniture, clothing, household articles etc. This movement gave rise to the South Kensington Museum, an unsurpassed collection of everything notable or characteristic that the arts of industry have produced anywhere or at any time. One sees there a collection of Portuguese provincial manufactures certainly far more complete than any in Portugal in any one of the industrial museums of Lisbon or Oporto. The reanimation of art among a people properly speaking destitute of it is

due to the South Kensington Museum, its schools of design, and its local branches. To it is owing the rejuvenescence of national forms and motives, and the artistic investigation of foreign types with which all art industries are replenished in a way really admirable.

## XVI

### THE STOCK EXCHANGE

UP to the present the English species has been studied, as well as I know how to do so, from the point of view of his customs as far as concerns his religion, his art, and his way of thinking ; but now that we are able to say we know something about them, let us see the English just in their own element. Let us take the bull by the horns, and enter all at once the heart of the City, the *Stock Exchange*.

When I found myself inside, kindly taken round by the chairman and a secretary of the patrician corporation of the world's capital, I felt a deep impression of sheepishness. It was not like when I entered St. Paul's, near to it. Besides, there was admiration at the historical power of the people that made me feel a sort of pride because I also am a man. *Nihil humanum a me alienum puto*. Noble grandeur in a neighbour never makes us feel small, be that neighbour an individual or a nation. But this case was different : it was wealth, not grandeur. It was a monstrously, fearfully



monstrously, colossal wealth. Money in mountains bigger than the Himalayas, absorbed by the huge tentacles of the great polypus that has its heart here while it squeezes and sucks the whole world. I was in Carthage in the palace of the Barcæ, whither came all the treasures of the mines of Spain and Sicily, and from the land of the Cassiterides. But it was Carthage with the proportion that the whole world is to the Mediterranean, a hundred times larger, and a thousand or a million times richer.

It was with a certain uneasiness that I crossed Throgmorton Street and entered the forbidden precincts, elbowing through the close throng around me. I went up the doorsteps to the ant-hill of people profoundly contrite at being poor, a son of a very poor country, even bankrupt publicly. Admittance was a great proof of favour, because the Stock Exchange only admits members, but rarely visitors. The chairman who took me through, said to me meaningly, "It is two years since a stranger was admitted." I felt confused when I had passed the door; in this place must have been the golden calf that the Jews so offended by worshipping in a moment of reactionary piety. It has an enormous roof surmounted by a dome. Around are deep chapels, and in each a pulpit with a priest in scarlet vestments by the side of a board where the quotations are marked in chalk. Columns of polished marble

sustain the dome, through which the light enters abundantly.

There is a vague hum of thousands of men who rush about, get into groups, and take notes in pocket-books, but all quietly, without that hateful and hellish row of the public Bourse of Paris. Nothing of this here. The company owning the house possesses a capital of £240,000 in 20,000 shares of £12 each. To be admitted one has to find security. There are three kinds of members: the first, with three securities, pay £525; the second, with two, pay £157 10s.; and thirdly the clerks, if "authorised" pay £52 10s., and if unauthorised, £10 10s. Beyond this there is no admittance. The public wait at the doors, as the people did in the days of the old Spanish Councils. Outside there is another kind of noise, nervously hurried "tips" and information, and audible remarks on those who enter the sacred precincts.

Inside, each set has its own chapel, its ritual, and its place in which gather the different orders of the priests of the Calf. The entire world is represented there, either by nations or species of business. Here are public funds, there are mines, there shipping companies, there railways, there factories. Here is the metropolis, there are the United States, elsewhere are Brazil or Australia, the entire world, without omitting a poor corner of it in which I saw with compunction that they

were dealing in "Portuguese Threes." My soul fell on its feet.

To be poor, weak, and insignificant is a dishonour in this land of Darwin, that has hoisted the victory of England in the life-and-death competition of this age as the flag of universal science; while the poor, and the weak, and the lowly, and the humble often conquer also, according to the Gospel for which the English seriously imagine they have so profound a veneration. It will be understood that, situated as I was under the weight of these impressions, the great sight of the turn of the engine of the world's riches produced in me an unpleasing effect.

Do not think that I exaggerate. I had the curiosity to take a note from the evening papers of the business done on the Stock Exchange in the day. In British railways there had been twenty-nine different securities dealt in; in Colonial, eighteen; in foreign bonds, fifty-four; in North American railways, thirty-eight; in canals and docks, seven; in industrial and commercial companies, fifty-three; besides the substantial British Consols and Bank of England stock. Securities not officially quoted on the Stock Exchange are without the rights of citizenship in the republic of capital, and without the world's passport.

Eleven years ago, in 1880, the total value of the securities officially quoted on the Stock Exchange, and therefore capable of being dealt in within it,

went up to £5,786,000,000. Now, at the end of 1891, it has risen to £6,347,000,000. Government funds amount to £3,700,000,000, and railways to £2,100,000,000, and are the principal items in the total. Consols represent £650,000,000; British Colonial Loans, £350,000,000; Foreign Funds, £2,500,000,000. British Railways have £830,000,000; Colonial, £220,000,000; North American, £680,000,000, and Foreign £380,000,000; Banks had £60,000,000 quoted, and the numerous industrial and commercial companies about £480,000,000. The capital of the British banks and companies is still much larger, because the Stock Exchange does not admit the world at large to citizenship. At the date from which the above-mentioned numbers were taken the joint-stock banks alone, that is to say putting aside private banks, numbered one hundred and thirty, and their shares were worth £206,000,000 altogether, of which £70,000,000 was paid up. The capital had tripled. The total of the deposits in the banks was then £670,000,000. People must get lost in this sea of money!

The companies recognised and quoted on the Stock Exchange do not amount to two-thirds of the whole, which was 13,323 companies, with a paid-up capital of £775,000,000. And all these companies, banks, and commercial houses stretch out from the city into every part of the globe, navigating steamers on the ocean, tracing railways

on continents, casting into seas nets of telegraph cables, installing plantations in one place, manufactures and warehouses in another, canals and docks in another, making their appearance wherever there are mines to work, lands to explore, and goods to exchange, from rudimentary barter with savage tribes to subtle combinations of banking operations among the most acute people.

The head of each of these houses, the manager of each of these companies, is a veritable prince; he has his captains and councillors, his delegates and agents, scattered over the earth. Between the talent for commercial speculation and that for political adventure there are many points of resemblance. A great merchant is very like a conqueror in the ability of his combinations, the energy and rapidity of his decisions, in the comprehensive way in which he takes in the conditions of markets or people in order to bring them within his power. Hour by hour the telegraph keeps him informed of the various pulsations of the mercantile world, and the autocrat of commerce traces in his office the places wherein to cast the nets of his operations. He has geography at his fingers' ends. He knows through innumerable maps, almanacs, guides, directories, and other books of reference, the strength and weakness of every country and every business. He has strings of facts, accumulated notes made, and statistics arranged, with the object of drawing out the marrow from

the world wherever there exists a particle of riches to be sucked out.

The City, the heart of London, has the Stock Exchange as a centre. There indeed is the capital of the money-making world, and as at the present day that occupation is the principal one, so the capital of the world may be said to be there. It breathes geography, talking of Australia, India, Brazil, and Japan, the price of wool, the value of the rupee, the quotations for coffee or cotton, and the fluctuations of silver. The most distant countries and the most exotic merchandise are suburbs and tributaries of the city which rules them. One house has Egypt, another Peru, another Mexico, and another Cashmere. There is a sort of primitive international law in commerce. Frontiers are respected, both in mercantile transactions and in spheres of influence.

While walking astopished around the circular room of the Stock Exchange, it seemed to me that there were within it the round edges of the globe itself, and is it not true that the art of man, overcoming time and distance, puts the world in the hand of the sower? We do so much that there now appears to us to be a kind of scant inheritance in the size of it, and one almost completely explored in every corner.

## XVII

### ENGLISH WEALTH

GREAT BRITAIN is a mountain of gold, but London by itself holds a great part of British wealth. The London Custom House yields as much as all the others of the United Kingdom put together. And all the movement to which this concentration of wealth gives rise is exercised within the City. The total for income-tax was calculated last year (1889—1890) at £70,000,000 in the City, and at £41,000,000 for the rest of England. Two years ago for the City it was £39,000,000, and for the rest of England £35,000,000. The actual total receipt was on one-half more, almost entirely from the City, where British wealth accumulates at a progressive rate. What is there not due to the population of the country, and the monstrous inflation of the English *wen*?

The interest alone of the public funds, both national and foreign, and from shares in banks and other companies, estimated by income-tax statements, exceeds £150,000,000. Giffen calculates

that in 1812, when the United Kingdom had 17,000,000 inhabitants, its total wealth was generally about £2,700,000,000, or £160 a head. In 1885, with 37,000,000, he reckons £10,000,000,000, or £270 a head. At the present day the amount for each person ought at least to be double what it was in 1812. But this wealth is not evenly distributed among the three kingdoms. To the mean of £270, poor Ireland contributes barely £93, and Scotland, rich in mines, figures at £243, while England and Wales figure at £308. Let us take three standards wherewith to measure the progress of English wealth in the last three decades of the second half of the century.

The first, which is the least valuable, is the Estimates. It is the least valuable because, on account of the system, or rather of the want of system, in English administration, the Parliamentary Estimates do not possess the character of those of Continental countries. For instance, the organisation of the Reserves, which in all military countries constitutes a heavy charge on the Estimates, is here represented by battalions of volunteers, armed, clothed, and equipped at their own expense. This effective *Landsturm* of 200,000 men does not cost a farthing to the Treasury, so to speak. Then the infinity of private institutions that exercise public functions in this country, in which the notion of State action has never taken definite shape. Then again, the expenses caused by local institutions in



a country which, in spite of monarchy, is above all things federal, and whose radical ambition is a constitution like that of the United States, without waiting for England to have had some centuries of central government and for the colonies to look up to the two islands as the metropolis of a gigantic empire dispersed throughout the world. Even making allowance for all these the British Estimates, which in 1850 showed £55,000,000 of expenditure, in 1890 show £88,000,000, the service of the National Debt having in the meanwhile sunk from £28,000,000 to £25,000,000. The additional expenditure, then, consisted in the rise from £27,000,000 to £63,000,000—in other words, it doubled.

Incomparably more expressive, however, are the statistics of commerce. Here we see that during the same period the imports quadrupled and the exports quintupled almost. In 1851 the imports were £105,000,000; in 1890 they were £420,000,000. In 1851 the exports were £74,000,000; in 1890 they were £328,000,000. This is an index that shows the increase of wealth in England. In 1870—twenty-two years ago—the imports per head of the population were £6 10s.: they are now over £11—nearly double. And side by side with the imports, the exports went up from £244,000,000 to £328,000,000. And during the same period the yield derived from capital invested outside the United Kingdom increased, and simultaneously the

incomparable fleet of ships that trade in all the seas of the world was augmented.

The third and last of the proofs we will select is the statistics of mineral production, noting the increase during the last twenty years. Trade, navigation, and mines are the three principal sources of the wealth of this people, so rich that they can afford to make agriculture a secondary consideration. There are almost as many miners as farm-labourers; there are 650,000 men, and some 6000 women. A thousand people die every year from accidents in mines. Coal, iron, copper, lead, tin, zinc, and the silver extracted from the lead are the principal products of the British mines, though some of them are decreasing in yield. They are ceasing to extract the silver from the lead because the daily lessening value of silver yields no profit. In 1870 there were produced 784,000 ounces, in 1890 only 291,000. Copper has also gone down through the irregularities of speculation: from 7000 tons in 1870 it got down to 1000 in 1890. Tin keeps at 10,000 tons. Lead decreased from 73,000 to 33,000 tons. Zinc increased from 4000 to 8000; finally, iron went from 6,000,000 tons in 1870 to 8,000,000 in 1890. And coal, the real gold of Britain, its strength, light, heat, its latent motion, and its sun in the shape of seams of black shining mineral—coal rose from 110,000,000 to 192,000,000 tons, not far short of double.

And when will they exhaust the heaps of it, accumulated during countless ages, a treasure which is being used up regardless of the future? Many ask this question; but the answer, as far as I can gather it, is that this is in the first place a good way off; and in the second place, when it does come men will already have imparted the means of efficiently utilising the two great forces of the sea and the winds, storing and distributing them by means of electricity; so that the people of the future will be free from the insufferable smokiness with which coal now smothers all manufacturing districts. London will possess another and a gayer aspect; but as the men always place the golden age in the past, they will yet have to sing of the happy time in which everything was dripping with a sticky blackness, and when towns seemed like monsters with big, sharp, brick teeth pointed upward to the sky, and sending forth smoke and flame.

Perhaps this will come to be celebrated in verse setting forth the *Victorian Age*, in which England was swimming in gold, because if men discover any motive power other than the expansion of steam by fire, since it is natural that England will no longer hold the monopoly of this power, the principal cause of her fortune in history will have disappeared, because the throne of Imperial Britain rests on a foundation of gold and iron. From the very moment in which the progress of mechanics

discovered new means of manufacture and transit by land and water—from that same moment England discovered that she had below ground the treasure of the primary materials for the operation of transforming the world's life.

By whom in the lottery of history was ever a prize like this drawn? If there were a people favoured by Nature with the monopoly of wheat, that people would not, even by this means, have had a fortune like England's. Coal is more than wheat. It is the universal bread of working humanity, the power of heat in a concentrated and portable form. Here, then, is the intimate secret of the magnificent edifice of British wealth. If a similar lot fell to any other people whatever, would that other people be as rich as the English? That depends: because one must add to the source of wealth the endowments of the abilities to make use of it.

A superior fecundity is the first of the endowments. At the beginning of the century these islands had 16,000,000 inhabitants, and now they have 39,000,000, in spite of having exported more than 30,000,000 emigrants. England and Wales went up from 9,000,000 to 29,000,000! And the hundreds of thousands of emigrants that every year leave these islands for the mercantile conquest of the world operate also as an element.

The second of these endowments is the qualities—physically energetic, instinctively acquisitive, and

intellectually submissive—of these legions of people born to work. Revolutionising with steam the mechanism of production and distribution, they have remained, through their monopoly of the prime motors of force, possessed of the monopoly of the seas, where steamers beat sailing vessels, and have inundated the world with their products of manufacture through their monopoly of it.

The reaction of modern Protectionism explains the violent effort that the world has made to free itself from the productions and from the economic protectorate of England, to whom coal has given a new kind of suzerainty over the universe. It was that which perchance natural intuition allowed Napoleon to foresee, blinded in other matters by his ambition of conquest. The great duel that ended in Waterloo, and cost Britain £831,000,000, gave her a victory that in following years meant ten, a hundred, or a thousand-fold profit. Free from the fear of blockade on the Continent, England could insure her mercantile and colonial empire by the uncontested rule of the seas of the world. Her fleets, proudly unfurling the British flag in every latitude of the globe, guarantee to her the interest of the wealth of every continent.

But things begin to change. The lesson has been learnt, and Napoleon's continental system re-appears in the systematic protection of the nations that are thus defending themselves. On the other side, if England is still mistress of the

seas, her empire on land has extended till she finds herself face to face with Russia. The duel between the elephant and the whale, to use Bismarck's expressive phrase, will be acted before the world's audience.

Meanwhile a century of incomparable fortune has made of Britain a mountain of gold. On the other side the Channel the unit is the franc; here it is the pound (which expression is generally used only in speaking of *amounts*, while *sovereign* is said of a single unit). The thermometer of wealth has risen twenty-five times. And where most people speak of sovereigns, many of the higher class speak of *guineas*, which are worth a little more.

Money is the pride of the English.

## XVIII

### GREENWICH—SHIPPING

"*MAKE money, my son ; honestly if you can, but make it !*"

This aphoristic counsel of the Scotch mother to her son who was going away from home, lets in the light to the innermost recesses of the national character.

With this object sail constantly from the ports of the island swarms of people who go all over the world to make money, *honestly if possible, but to make it.*

The sweat of humanity from Britain is one of the fundamental causes of her fortune. This was what I was thinking of on board the little steamer that conveyed me down the river to Greenwich.

The morning was mild. The river appeared like a lake of molten lead, with reflections in it of the colour of slate. The smoke from the chimneys, unable to rise, floated to and fro slowly in the air. The horizons were very close and uncertain ; worlds were seen to revolve beyond the curtains of haze through which we were going ; and these

curtains gave forth fiery or golden reflections from the light of the sun going his round. Silence reigned almost supreme. One only heard the measured beat of the steamer's paddles in the water that rolled aft. One breathed in with the air a savour of coal or gas-tar. The people on board were all of the poorer class: some stages cost only a penny. It was bad to have to spend even as little as that. The contrast of this peace and silence with the insensate tumult of the streets I had just come from operated upon me like a shower-bath. But I awoke to reality when there passed close to us another steamer or long barge drifting along, her sails hanging down from lack of wind. From time to time I was awakened by the beat of hammers, echoed by the heavy atmosphere. On both sides, at a distance of half-a-mile—for we were in the middle of the river—I heard the invisible hum of the modern Babylon of six millions of inhabitants writhing in its daily attack of epilepsy. The indolent forgetfulness of existence was in course of picturing itself to me as much more human, when a sailor with a smutty face and large beard, and a clay pipe in the corner of his mouth, making the rope fast to the post on the pier, yelled out "Greenwich." We had arrived, and the steamer was alongside the pier. "Greenwich!" This name evokes the grandeurs of maritime England of the period of my infancy, when fleets had many dozens of ships, magnificent



ships with three decks and over a hundred guns, like the *Duke of Wellington* I went on board in the Tagus when I was a child: frigates with a white band round, variegated with black port-holes, and brigs and schooners that were the dispatch vessels of *that day*. I remembered the sailors with blue shirts, the marine artillerymen with a little round cap over the ear, and the marine light infantry with scarlet jackets, broad-shouldered, strong, Herculean, going in troops through the Ribeira-Nova, filling the taverns, devouring oranges, and generally kicking up a dust in the waterside part of Lisbon.

How is it that even the most trifling recollections fill us with melancholy longing for the past? Do they come from the foggy weather to-day? Or is it that this longing marks the onward course of life towards the destiny consisting in its final annihilation?

England, like all islands, seems to me something like a large ship. In life there is not the massive regularity of continental existence. Perhaps from this—only with the addition requisite to be made in the case of a great people—comes the common character of islanders, uncertain what direction their strength may take, and difficult to read aright because their sentiments are hard to see into. England is the flag-ship of the infinite squadron of ships that in all the seas of the world come and go under sail and under steam, with

two-thirds of the world's cargoes on board. Singular destiny, extravagant floating empire, to be always on the move! Immense ant-heap of ships and men, marking out the world into the map of their trade-routes.

In the year 1890, the British mercantile marine almost reached 10,000,000 tons, four times what it was in 1830! All the mercantile navies of all other nations of the world added together do not reach the total of the British, which has on board crews to the number of 250,000.

And this is the real natural bent of the race, and it is also therein that it develops the instinct of art, always more or less latent in man. There are no ships, there are certainly no steamers, like the British. They are whales with the shape of swans. The grace and elegance of the lines of British naval architecture own no superior. The Frenchman, so constitutionally an artist on land, is clumsy on the sea. His steamers have too much work in them, they are not light enough. I went to England in the *Magdalena*, and came back in the *Bresil*, two new transatlantic liners that may serve as types of comparison: the *Magdalena* light and elegant, like a bird; the *Bresil* round and massive like a whale. In one thing the Englishman, under penalty of losing his existence, has had to give utterance to this latent feeling called art. The ship is the monument, the palace, the home of this people, who while they are ashore are almost

afloat within the coasts of their islands, rolling along which flows the great Gulf Stream.

The ship is the masterpiece of British art. Even already the Americans, in spite of their heredity, have lost the intuition of naval architecture. If the French ships have too much work in them, the Americans are lanky and out of joint, without harmony or proportion in their shapes. The ships thus reproduce traces observed in the architecture of the human body on both sides of the Atlantic.

Multiplying itself on the sea as prolifically as the race multiplies itself, British tonnage is already in excess. The crisis of the ship-owning industry is being felt. Freights have got lower. Whole fleets are rusting away at their anchors in harbour. Three years ago a ton of nitrate cost thirty-five to forty shillings to bring from the Pacific to England; now it is brought for fifteen, so great is the competition. Briareus, with his hundred, thousand, or his millions of arms dominating the Titans of the sea, while he crowned Britannia, over-rated her strength.

On the return journey the day cleared up. Going upwards from Greenwich the river begins to look like a London street on which the ships are the vehicles. From both sides project piers over the black and shining mud, left uncovered at low water, and wharves with cranes vomiting forth steam as they work over the hold of the ships and barges alongside. On each side of the river,

or street, run warehouses of five floors, that look like prisons built of red bricks, black with smuts, with the fronts adorned with all colours in the shape of enormous advertisements relating to storage and manufacture. Then roofs and chimneys of workshops, heaps of materials—wood, sand, stone, coal, sacking, piles of barrels, that powerful drays or railway-trucks drag from the bulky hulls of the ships. Singular note—the first vessel attached to the nearest wharf to London Bridge was the Portuguese vessel *Marianna*, if I am not mistaken. The old times when Lisbon was the mart of the world's sea-trade came back to my mind.

I then saw slips on which steamers were laid up for repair and for the purpose of ship-building without end, with workshops and engines; vessels getting ready to be launched, and, already launched, going to join the bands of floating squadrons in the seas of the world.

Here and there a tributary of the Thames breaks its continuity; it is perhaps a lock that leads into the inland seas called docks, where vessels lie thick side by side, and where, seen from a distance, the masts and yards seem like the branches of a forest in winter when the cold has stripped them of leaves. Inside the docks the traffic is immense and the picture magnificent. The water disappears, and even the land as well. Ships cover the water; buildings, windlasses, lines,

of rail, mountains of merchandise of every kind, cover the land. Nature becomes a mere unlikely supposition. The violence of human industry has effaced everything at its will; even the air itself is artificial, produced by the acrid mixture of smoke with heavy exhalations from resinous substances. Sky there is none. As far as the smoke allows one to see, it is a colossal web made by monstrous spiders, designed upon a ground of thick atmosphere by the yards and rigging of an infinite number of ships, about to sail for, or having arrived from, the most different parts of the world—the Cape, New York, Buenos Ayres, San Francisco, Melbourne, Hong Kong, or Canton. All languages are being spoken, and one sees every colour of skin and every type of human physiognomy.

It was nearly dark when I got back, and another little steamer brought me alongside the pier close to Cleopatra's Needle. On one side the gilded summits of Westminster reached up to the sky. I went ashore thinking I was in Alexandria, where the genius of the conqueror of India left established the market of the world as a legacy to the heirs of his captain Ptolemy.

## XIX

### EMIGRATION

I WENT to bed, and fell asleep wrapped up in the thoughts of the old woman with white corkscrew curls and with spectacles on her nose, saying to her son as he was on the point of leaving home, "Make money, my son ; honestly if you can, but make it."

How many impressions, how many ideas did these words suggest to me! Get money—that is the essential thing. Do not fill your head with chivalrous notions or any other preconceptions. Take this as your motto—*Make money!*

I remember the living English philosopher Spencer, whose *Introduction to Social Science* consists in clearing the ground of what he considers the successive preconceptions of olden times—patriotism, religion, civic fidelity, etc. After everything has been well cleared away there remains the old woman's motto, *Make money.*

As I was oppressed with sleep, Spencer appeared to me to be wearing corkscrew curls, or the old woman seemed to be at a table among piles of

books. And my sleepiness expressed a truth, because genuine philosophers confine themselves to reducing to rules the spontaneous sentiments of the people.

The English people may be divided into three main categories—those who live to spend money, those who live by the sweat of their brow to get it, and those who, without getting it and certainly without spending it, die of hunger. Everything is included in this. In general, among other people, earning a livelihood is a constant obligation, but is in one sense a secondary one. The *object* of life is not to vegetate on more or less rich soil. But here this does not hold good. If all pre-conceptions be suppressed, as the philosopher and the old woman want, life simply remains for people as a mere round of nourishment and digestion. This they call the “practical mind,” and are proud of it. Much good may it do them. It is true that, for so much as it is worth, if they are not sober they are not covetous. Avarice is the vice of thrifty people, like the French for instance.

It is also true that this idea of life constitutes one of the most solid foundations of individual energy. If there is a struggle for existence, a war between everybody and everybody else, as another English philosopher before Darwin’s time defined it, *bellum omnium in omnes*, in Hobbes’s own words, every one ought to be ready for the campaign, get

drilled, and enter it vigorously, elbowing the next man to him, and getting into his place without chivalrous sentiments—"honestly if you can," without sentimental or metaphysical contemplations—trash, preconceptions!

Under its own particular circumstances, then, this people appears an army by the discipline and submission consequent on the particular kind of life that it has had to encounter—a combat. "Is life worth living?" This excellent and suggestive question, that formed the title of a mediocre book published a short time ago, was answered in the affirmative. Certainly it is worth living! Nor can the answer be any other for any one who does not embarrass the human vegetable with the tormenting afflictions of sentiment and ideas, or the sometimes tragic and always cruel blows of dedication, sacrifice, and chivalry. And this is what brings life to be considered unworthy of being lived in the minds of people capable of being charmed away by what the English call preconceptions.

The false steps in the struggle for existence, instead of causing us to abhor it, cause us to love it more strongly each time, with the hope that victory will gild it. The proof of this is the love of fighting that war unfolds among soldiers. It makes the most of its strength by training. The longing for conquering, or living, grows stronger. In this pure sphere of animal instinct in which the Englishman lives life is at its best; excellent in the campaign



for the conquest of wealth; excellent in the time occupied in expenditure and digestion. In England the only suicides that happen are from absolute hunger, or from *the spleen*, that is to say, from the abhorred vacuity that certain eccentric natures feel in satiety after they have drained the cup of every animal instinct.

If, however, the natural individualism of the English lends itself voluntarily to discipline and intrinsic social order, though in a confused way, as it appears to us methodic Southerners, the absence of preconceptions, which for us are in general (but a good deal *in general*) the principal leading motives, and the domination of a simple and fixed idea, allows room to build up the material strength the English possess.

Energetic, disciplined, and phlegmatic, they emigrate from their islands to the number of hundreds of thousands annually, scattering themselves over the world in order to lay it under contribution. It is a natural element against which artificial laws will be made in vain. Even when the accidents of history take away from England the empire over which she reigns; even then, and always as long as they export two hundred thousand heads every year, the English people will rule the world. One proof of this is the United States. Independent, even perhaps hostile, they add incomparably more to the greatness of the British than when they were a mere province in the British Colonial Empire.

These United States, which a century ago, in 1790, just about the time of the separation, scarcely possessed four millions of inhabitants, in 1890 counted sixty-two millions and a half. Shoots of the German race are grafted on to the Saxon stock, but the language, the highest expression of nationality, remains English. In a total of £750,000,000, to which figure the foreign trade of Great Britain rose in 1890, almost the fourth part, or £143,000,000 to be more exact, represent importations from, and exportations to, the United States.

On this account, if the heaps of iron and coal England discovered in her bosom when civilisation entered into the age of steam are at the base of wealth, the instrument of this wealth and power is the emigration of people of the peculiar character of these men.

From 1861 to 1889 there emigrated from the United Kingdom—

English	...	...	...	...	3,670,000
Scotch	...	...	...	...	761,000
Irish	...	...	...	...	3,318,000
Total					<u>7,749,000</u>

who distributed themselves thus—

United States	...	...	...	5,092,000
Canada	...	...	...	815,000
Australasia	...	...	...	1,421,000
Various other parts	...	...	...	421,000
			Total	<u>7,749,000</u>

In twenty-nine years this gives 267,000 a year. And the 15,000 that every year scatter themselves over the "various other parts" are those who go to India, the Cape, Brazil, the Argentine Republic, the Pacific, China, and the Far East, to plant everywhere the red flag of the struggle for life, and take toll all over the world.

Then this wave of people, flowing from the ports of Great Britain, draws along with it the fluctuating emigrations that incorporate themselves with the army of colonists, while they absorb British notions from the very start. The Jews number a good many. In 1890, 315,980 emigrants left British ports, out of whom 97,864 were foreigners. The 218,116 natives distributed themselves three-fourths to the United States, and the remainder in about equal proportions to Canada, Australia, and different other parts. The total of this last kind of emigration increased from 15,000 to 22,000, because the emigration to Africa is now considerable, although that to Australia has got less since the gold fever subsided.

Into all climates, among natives of every race, the British go exploring the riches of the world in all forms, and generally conquer.

Why? What is the secret they possess? Why is it that they conquer, when for instance the Germans, allied to them by race, and exporting as many people as the British, generally come to nothing? Because the German's conception of life is not the Englishman's.

The secret of the British colonial success is in the endowments (or rather in the want of them) of the men. Destitute of ideas, systems, and preconceptions, as Spencer calls them, brought up only and energetically by the instinct of gain, they adapt themselves to circumstances, go over the ground, study carefully the actual state of things, and so walk in a safe path; just as the Continentals carry away with them from home a regular baggage of ideas and systems which are rarely of any use for the particular circumstances they find themselves in. This is why the English are called the practical people above all others. Subjective by nature, they wrap up their individuality in the secret recess of the *I*: adapting themselves externally to everything, they always remain as they have been. Just in the same way the communicative Continental either loses himself in trying to attach his neighbour to his own ways of thinking, or loses his own personality in the contact with that of others.

Scattering themselves over the world they have almost as many colonial governments as colonies. It is just as circumstances turn out, just as the ball happens to roll between the skittles. They go along accommodating themselves to the law of nature. And this is just why they find life excellent.

## XX

### BUFFALO BILL AND THE BRITISH EMPIRE

AFTER breakfasting at the Amphytrion, a fashionable French restaurant, clothed in the garb of a club in order to satisfy judicial regulations, to the contentment of the fine flower of the *swells*, we started for Earl's Court to see Buffalo Bill, formerly the Honourable William Cody, because this personage is a Senator of the United States, besides being a Colonel, and is also a Senator of the State of Kansas. Good, in so far as I have not the honour of being a citizen of that part of the world.

When I entered the circus I saw in the next box some fellow-passengers who had come in the same boat with me ; they consisted of a dozen of *gauchos* from the Pampas, in jackets and *ponchos*, engaged by Buffalo Bill to come and exhibit in the circus the lasso and other incidents of Argentine pastoral sport. We fraternised. My English neighbours, seeing us laughing and speaking a human language unintelligible to themselves, regarded us with a "smile of dull complacency peculiar to a vain and

self-satisfied Englishman," as our Herculano<sup>1</sup> says in the caustic pages of his voyage from Jersey to Granville. Self-satisfied they certainly were: whether vain or not, I am not so sure about; but even if they were, they had reason to be.

Buffalo Bill, with long locks flowing over his shoulders, a moustache and imperial like those of the tenor of an Opera Comique, a gun at his waist-belt, galloped round the circus managing the performance of the pantomimes of sport. This ridiculous chieftain, however, gained celebrity in hunting real buffaloes, and beating real Redskins at the time when there were yet Indians and wild beasts in American territories now operated upon by steam threshing-machines.

Just now passed through me memories of my childhood, when an old bachelor uncle I had, Uncle Tom, took me on Sunday evenings to the Praça do Salitre to see the pantomimes of Don José Serrate. At that time recollections of the wars of the first half of the century were still alive, and I very well remember the enthusiasm produced in me by the mimic battles and assaults, with the noise of artillery, the playing of bands, and the showy uniforms. The days of old seemed to me to have come back again; and there were no "smiles of dull complacency," but real delight and open laughter were pictured on the faces of the spectators. I—they—all seemed to have become children

<sup>1</sup> The eminent modern historian of Portugal.—TRANS.

again. Indeed there are no people so much like children as the English.

Buffalo Bill galloped in the rear of his squad of buffaloes with effect, poor beasts worthy of compassion. Buffalo Bill fired into the air at shells that he broke, and each shot provoked thunders of guttural applause. Buffalo Bill, commanding his party of horsemen, saved the little squatter's hut from an attack of Redskins who appeared equipped with javelins, with coloured stripes, with feathers on their heads, and fearfully wry expressions on their faces. Perched up in the middle of the circus a showman gravely expounded to the public the different events in the assault, a spontaneous confession of paralysis on the part of the nerves of the public intelligence, and of the necessity that it should know all from the beginning! Things like these make Continentals smile.

Buffalo Bill galloped, fired, trotted, and turned about, filling the whole circus with his figure of wild man promoted to chieftain, a grotesque medley of the powerful and the ridiculous, like the stuffed model of a hero whose pantomimes reproduced scenes acted by himself in earnest during his buffalo-hunting campaigns. Could there be really a more *English* spectacle? Realistic, because he had actually killed Indians and buffaloes; sportsmanlike, because he was an excellent rider and a good shot; and comic, because the comic

hero of the pantomime put people's jaws out of joint with laughter : all this was just the very cast of things to please the public. On this account the many thousands of mouths in the amphitheatre applauded deliriously. There must have been something like it in Bœotia, facsimiles of the Phrygian dances and athletic games.

For this English people, that possesses the geographical instinct, the exhibition of squadrons of Mexican Aztecs, Texan Indians, and Cossacks from the Don, competing for the prize in the race presenting the most curious and daring feats of horsemanship, laying open the world and its races before the eyes of the spectators, especially in that particular—*sport*—which is the greatest attraction for the Englishman, was indeed an absorbing spectacle.

On this account the performance has now been presented nearly two hundred times ; and always when the variegated picture of Buffalo Bill appears at the corners with the advertisement of a performance, it draws the public well to the circus and fetches plenty of money. After hunting the buffalo, Bill now hunts the Cockney. He has exchanged the Far West for the West End, always keeping in the extreme west, whether of savagery or civilisation.

Singular spectacle, indeed, that of a tribe of Indians exposed in their wigwams, men, women, and children, exhibiting the strangeness of their



savage life before an amphitheatre of people really only civilised outside, while inside they possess unaltered the strength, and blunt and childlike ingenuousness, of real savages ! How their eyes flashed when the squads of Indians formed in column, and shaking the lances and shields, and uttering war-cries, advanced with the war-dance, the sign of battle !

To me they seemed like pictures of the Greeks in the Panhellenic gatherings; they saw with their eyes, while in their minds they could not help remembering the battles fought for the conquest of continents and the triumphant vassalage of more backward countries. They had on their faces not the smile of complacency but an expression of triumph, because in the spectacle laid before their eyes they unconsciously saw the magnificent drama of their victorious expansion over our planet.

Of the 52,000,000 square miles of the area of the globe, more than a fourth part, or 15,000,000, are British; and over her sea area Britain has complete dominion. There never was any such empire. Of the 1,500,000,000 of inhabitants of the world, almost the third part, 450,000,000, speak the language or obey the orders of the British. The little islands of the North of Europe, their hundred thousand miles of area and their thirty-seven millions of inhabitants, are the capital of this immense empire, that in the confused imagination of the spectators

at Earl's Court seemed to be reproduced by exhibitions of savage people at the word of command of Buffalo Bill.

Really startling is the expansion of this people that, like the Roman, in the absence of preconceptions in former times necessary for competitors, takes its origin from its natural strength. Embarked on board its ships, sending off superfluous population, it has rendered the whole extra-European world largely dependent on itself, settling and procreating wherever nature has given consent, limiting itself to governing and enriching itself whenever the climate has not permitted it to settle at the expense of the natives.

In America they founded an empire by the former of these methods, the United States, independent politically, but allied in custom, ideas, commerce, and language. They have three-and-a-half millions of square miles of land, and sixty-two millions of population.

In Asia they founded by the latter process another empire, India, with its two hundred and eighty-four million people, occupying eighteen hundred thousand square miles of territory, reduced to vassalage, but unified and drawn out of the somnolency that the Mongolians and Arabs had caused it to fall into, in order to raise it to the new life of a vigorous civilisation. The resurrection of India will preserve for ever the memory of the *Victorian Age* in the history of civilisation.

Next comes Australia, where the native was exterminated and a future empire like that of America founded, where there are already more than four millions of Europeans on three million square miles. Australia has its retinue of islands, Fiji, New Guinea, Tasmania, and New Zealand.

Then comes Canada, the younger sister of the United States, equal in area, with almost six millions of Europeans. Then there are the islands and archipelagoes of the American seas. Bermuda, the Falkland Islands, the Bahamas, Barbadoes, Jamaica, Trinidad, the Leeward and the Windward Islands, with the northern coasts of Labrador and Newfoundland contiguous to them, and the tropical coasts of Guiana. This legion of dependencies amounts to three hundred thousand square miles, with two millions of inhabitants.

We have not yet spoken of Africa, lately divided; that part consisting of Guinea, the Gambia, Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, Lagos, and Yoruba, with the Niger territories, a vast sleeve-shaped tract of three hundred and fifty-five thousand miles, inhabited by twenty-four million negroes; and a part in the south, having its capital at the Cape, and extending through all the interior into the lands of the Zulus and the Basutos, with Natal on the coast; and Bechuanaland and Mashonaland as far as the Zambesi, and from the Zambesi northwards to the Nyassa, where it touches to the right the establishments of

the East Coast, and in front Egypt, which is also British. It is a million of square miles, with four millions of negroes. And on the outer fringe come the islands of the African Sea, Mauritius, St. Helena, Ascension, and Tristan da Cunha. Of all this there remain at least Portuguese names!

Patience, because we have not yet got to the end.

On the highway from England to the Far East the route for shipping requires coaling stations and places of refuge, fortresses, both for defence as well as guaranteeing the safety of the highway. At the entrance to the Mediterranean lies Gibraltar, then further on Malta, then Cyprus, then Egypt, then Aden on the Red Sea, then Ceylon in the Indian Seas, then Hong Kong in China, as well as Labuan and the Straits Settlements, Penang, Malacca, Singapore, and Borneo. India having been reduced to a state of dependence, Britain descends upon Burmah, Pegu, and Arracan at the same time that she advances from Singapore to Menang in order to reduce the western side of the peninsula of Indo-China. These territories include twenty-seven thousand square miles and four millions of inhabitants.

And this colossal empire grows every day with the irresistible force of an element nourished by the constant current of emigration, the Gulf Stream of blood that flows all over the exotic world, to tinge it with Europeanism while it subjugates or exterminates the natives.

On this account the Cockneys of Earl's Court clap their hands, enough to make you faint, when they see the carbines of Buffalo Bill's troop drive off the Redskins from the lowly squatter's hut, and leave all round it a heap of (pretended) carcasses.

## XXI

### NOMAD LIFE—JOURNEY TO ASCOT

I DO not wonder that the English, scattered so widely over the world, always to be found upon the move to and from their dominions, acquire the nomad instincts. This fundamental trace of their active character struck me forcibly in an excursion I made to Ascot races. Among the contrasts that the souls of these islanders are made of, not the least is that, while loving above all things the snugness of home, they are as a simple matter of fact running about everywhere.

They are essentially nomad. Away from England they are everywhere thinking of their Fatherland, and constructing it afresh everywhere, living isolated in the colonies, whence they go, periodically, like Arab pilgrims to Mecca, to warm themselves at the sacred hearth. In their own island, just as on board ship, they are possessed with the spirit of unrest to see if they can discover in the sea of life any novelty capable of curing the spleen that lives in the depths of every one of them.

Do not think that travelling is a mere self-indulgence here; it is a necessity and a rule. Every one travels. Rich people travel. People travel for their health. Extravagant as the Englishman is, little savings of middle-class families go every year in excursions on to the Continent that possesses such attractions for them, whatever disdain for it they may manifest.

Whole families go altogether, with or without men, because the women, as soon as they arrive at a certain age, and whether they get married or not, exchange their vapoury ways for a virile or at least unfeminine air. They go with Murray or Baedeker under their arms, and with the tickets and programmes organised by Cook for travelling over a pre-arranged itinerary, to see Paris, Milan, Venice, Switzerland or Sweden, at certain fixed prices, without the caprice and conceit of thinking and sentimental people, but with a rule laid down as for one who is undergoing some course of medical treatment. These excursions are an indispensable part of the hygiene of their temperament. They are distractions without which they would get out of health and wither away with the blues.

When they are not travelling away from home, they go on a beat inside their own houses. The upper-class people do not live in London more than three months, May, June, and July. Away from these months they are away to, going about

from, country house to country house, to parties, picnics, and shootings, and on visits and other amusements that recall the saying of Talleyrand—"If it were not for the amusements life might be endurable." One must have muscles of steel, and eat like these people, both men and women, do eat, in order to support so much toil. If the legs get weak and the head gets wearied, alcohol comes to the rescue to excite the jaded organism. The vice is not confined to the miserable classes or to the masculine sex.

When the carriage that took me entered the Esplanade at Ascot, I seemed to find myself in an encampment. There were congregated a hundred thousand people on an immense flat piece of land surrounded by massive shady trees that lay on a background of dark blue sky and disclosed the gradual undulations of the ground; a hundred thousand persons and an infinity of vehicles of every form and shape, from the irreproachable break drawn by Danish trotters to the quaint dog-cart that went along by my side with a farmer's family out for a day's amusement; *she* wrapped up in a dark shawl, *he* biting his cherry-wood pipe stuck between his lips clothed with a carrotty moustache. Next up came at the trot a four-in-hand, with servants in livery, and magnificent bays, belonging to his grandeur the squire, seated on the box as on a throne, driving his team as though he were ruling provinces; square built,



powerful, face round, red like a peppercorn fresh off the tree, short reddish whiskers, grave as a bishop, erect as a statue. It was John Bull in the flesh. And like this mail were innumerable others of every available kind; some private property, others hired, some very good, others good, with baskets full of walking-sticks hung up by the side, and inside enormous baskets of provisions which in a short time will be opened in a sumptuous fare of lunches washed down with draughts of champagne, and outside the coach, on the top of it, fair-haired women in light dresses setting off the blue of the sky against the silk of their red parasols.

On the other side of the course are the stands ranged along the front, in the middle rising up that of the Master of her Majesty's Buckhounds, the Earl of Coventry, high-priest of the national feast of races. Below the stands on a flat piece of turf is the *Grand Stand*. Behind are the gardens inevitable in every English house, gardens covered with tables with bottles of champagne by the side, plates, crockery, glass, fruits, ices, sweets, birds, cooked meats, tarts, pies, an Olympian assemblage of victuals that men-servants in breeches gravely lay out at the disposal of the golden-haired ladies and smooth gentlemen in large overcoats with flowers at their button-holes, opera glasses slung in their shoulder belts, eye-glasses up at their eyes, and on their heads hats bright as mirrors. Close

too a band was playing waltzes. It was what they call "charming."

For the English people civilisation consists in the *charming*, good house, dressing well, feeding well, gadding about with money in their pockets at a racecourse along with ladies. For this they undergo hardships. Following in the wake of a common notion, they civilise the world, while they persuade themselves that they are civilising themselves as well. Their idea of civilisation, formal and showy as it is, consists in little else than vanity, self-indulgence, and appetite: it is just the natural idea of a savage.

Turning my back on the stands I crossed the course, which was guarded by wires and by police, in order to get among the people, in the rear of whom were arranged in order of battle the carriages serving as stands for those who were there devouring their lunches. The three great social divisions were in cantonments; the flower opposite, the middle-class here on their vehicles, and the multitude down there with their elbows against the rail.

It was, as is always the case in England, a good-humoured multitude. Rustic grace is a thing that does not exist; the country is suburban. Of the picturesqueness of poverty there is likewise none: the poor put on just what the rich are leaving off, so that the multitudes have no special characteristic, but a dull and uninviting appearance. \* is rather a grotesque relic of that state

of society in which contrast and want of balance show themselves in everything from the highest to the lowest, and from the most apparent to the hardest to find out. The people have no mirth. They groan instead of sing ; they mutter instead of speak. They move about heavily and in silence ; great baskets of oranges take the place of the choice bouquets on the other side the Channel. And in little open places among the packed throng the classic Scotchman is to be seen, tartan on shoulder, bagpipes, and naked legs, producing from his bag of skins the nasal and melancholy tones of the Highland lays. In other places are conjurers making the most out of the dull and confiding trust of the people. Beyond there is a larger space ; black-faced minstrels in grotesque attire scrape fiddles, whistle on flutes, and cry over banjos, accompanying this, which they call music, with antics, leaps, and groans with some pretence to songs, in the midst of bursts of animal laughter let loose from mouths drawn wide open to the ears. Only an Englishman diverts himself with violence ; his heavy machinery is insensible to slight impressions. On one side the animal nature is plebeian, on the other side it is gilded ; essentially, however, it is one and the same thing.

The races are the natural festivals, because it is here that society exhibits its flowers, horses, and women. These two specimens of creation constitute another pride of England.

## XXII

### INSTINCTS

OH, what a splendid show of women there was on the stands! The sun made some momentary attempts at shining, and kissing the golden hair of the Englishwomen drew forth from it a metallic lustre: they appeared to have on coronets of sovereigns in this apotheosis of riches.

They showed me three or four professional beauties, who unhappily were conscious of it. The favourite thoroughbreds are more fortunate: they do not know what envies they provoke.

For the many rich the two divinities are these, the *favourite* and the *professional beauty*. British nationalism worships itself in these two products manufactured by training and hereditary selection; and this worship has so much of the headstrong animal about it, that a friend of mine whose artistic temperament is unrivalled, and at the same time a man who has drunk of the pleasures of the world, once told me that he nowhere so much as in England felt inclined to fall in love.

There is indeed, be it from climate or whatever

cause it may be, an awakening of the senses that explains the romances of Fielding and Smollett in the eighteenth century, the carnival of the Restoration in the previous one, the previous licence of the time of Henry VIII., and the re-awakening of the present day, that rends the Puritanic veil of coercion or hypocrisy, cast through fear or cant upon the Herculean shoulders of a full-blooded race—

“Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay !”

The favourite horse, just like the professional beauty, has a fixed standard which is changeable only so far as the individual is concerned, the same type being always maintained. The woman-type always has auburn hair. Already in Rome in the time of Cæsar, when the great conqueror came back from the subjugation of Gaul and from entering into relations with the Germans, all the fashionable women dyed their hair golden. The dyeing of the hair was a rule in the old city that also excited with the very same natural impressions the sensitive nerves of the Greeks, or of the Neo-Greeks of the South of France, artists whom Rome attracted to herself by the splendour of her wealth.

But the hidden expressions that propriety restrains, not being able to express themselves in the forms made use of by people of social instincts, are obliged to make use of derivatives capable of being expressed in permitted manifestations that minister to strength of feeling. On this account as soon as

one race is over and the numbers are hoisted, now in the interval of pause that succeeds the feverish anxiety of the race, when all are on tip-toe with their necks craning forward, their eyes leaping out of their sockets, and their breasts heaving ; now, instead of a few minutes of quiet repose and friendly conversation, there is what I discover to have formed the cause of the anxiety of a few minutes ago. As soon as one race is over they directly begin to bet on another. There is no rest. All these necks, all these eyes, all this black care, do not sit behind the horseman, but behind the bet. It is the fear about their money that arouses them. And yet these angular moralists preach at us Southerners because we have lotteries !

The horse and the woman are indeed divinities ; but the temple, or the cell, in which they are worshipped is on the other side, in the enclosure for the bookmakers, from which comes forth a terrifying din—" One to twenty ! Three to one ! "

Each horse has its quoted price. Every race provokes its shout. Within the enclosure, against the partition within the four sides occupied by a multitude of gentlemen close together in the circle, the *bookmakers* look like wild beasts robbed of their young. It frightens you to look at them. The face is injected, the voice hoarse with shouting, the arms epileptic with agitation. And, seated on benches, their clerks go on coolly booking the bets of the gentlemen who, in haughty monosyllables

and commanding gestures, are presiding over the auction.

Everybody bets, everybody gambles: the grave man with white whiskers, and the fair-haired miss with eyes of blue. One gentleman, an acquaintance of mine, whose fortune must reach £50,000, once laid £10,000, the fifth part of his whole property, in one single bet. They are a venturesome people, capable of everything, and it is just because of this that they have done so much.

Once upon a time, where it was I do not remember, I saw an engraving that made an impression upon me. There was a fair-haired girl reading a book to her father, an old sailor seated in an arm-chair with a glass of whisky and water by his side. In the background was a window through which you could see the sea, and on the wall a portrait of Nelson. Underneath was the name of the picture, *The North-West Passage*, with this motto: "It might be done; England should do it."

This pride of strength is the nerve centre of the British character; but in the case of the bets there is another parallel pride that is still a mere variety of the other: the love of money. Is it not, so far as the Englishman is concerned, that money is the prime mover?

Women, horses, and money: these are the three idols of the British nature.

Women are their vanity, horses their instrument, and money the expression of their triumphal

strength. Betting and gambling are the positive affirmations of that strength, which for them is the supreme essence of the world. They bet and gamble with the concentrated energy that they put into everything. The engine is strong and heavy; it requires heat-producing fuel to set it to work. They like piquant sauces and peppers at table. Afterwards the bet becomes a peril, an adventure, a duel ; the blind butt of a bull at a stranger. The pride of money shows itself in the pride of strength ; it is not like mere spending, which scarcely satisfies vanity. The gambler who bets his worth with the consciousness of the consequences of failure, risks it without a gesture, a wry face, or a cry from the lips. I observed them : the only thing I thought I noticed about them was a peculiar gleam of the eyes. Pride concentrates and represses. The absorbent passion keeps them silent. After the lance has been thrown the nerves are contracted in the anxiety of winning. Betting is a *sport* as far as the feelings are concerned ; the athletic sentiments consist of pride in its rudimentary form of animal force.

*Sport* is indeed the synthetic formula of the character of this people, at one of the most suggestive exhibitions of which I was present, at Ascot—sport when they run, row, or shoot ; sport when they make love, sport when they eat, sport when they launch out into the world in quest of fortune, subduing nations, ruling seas, exterminating



wild beasts, through the irremediable necessity of the struggle for life, or as a relief from the feeling of fulness that the spleen of satiety makes so painful.

Singular paradox! The Englishman, making the real essence of life to consist in animal energy, does not know or understand in what way to direct the victories so heroically achieved. Like Ixion stretched on the wheel, he continues to run in quest of something to satisfy his insatiable energy, supposing civilisation to consist in a polished-up and bedecked imitation of barbarian contests. In this paradox that strikes the observation of Continentals lies, however, the secret of victory; because directly he began to make his activity run on rational lines, from that same moment he would lose the force that impels him. Solomon would never enounce here his definition of life, *Vanitas vanitatum*. The Englishman rouses himself, sets out, has a go at it, and succeeds: on this account he has in him something of the violence of the bull. If the bulls knew what was coming, they would not lower their heads to toss.<sup>1</sup>

The only difference between a Continental and an Englishman is that the one is capable of contemplation, while the other, if occasionally he encounters himself when alone with himself, sees visions or

<sup>1</sup> An apparent allusion to the attitude of the bull best available for sticking the *banderillo* in the back of his neck at a bull-fight.—TRANS.

extravagances arise before his imagination. The self-conscious nature of the Englishman always perches him up on the two fingers of folly ; and on that account he instinctively avoids reflection, seeking substitutes for it in animal life along with sport, and in the life of company of his own type, created by those who are no conversationalists. When they speak, which is exceptional, they relate anecdotes, and they flirt equivocally with the women, at times going far beyond continental bounds. When they are not flirting they are reading sensational novels to keep up sentimental excitement ; and when they are not travelling they are reading about travels, picturing to themselves routes, intoxicating themselves with prospects and adventures, in order to satisfy the constitutional unrest of their spirit.

This is why they are nomads. Even when they are not travelling their imagination is continually on the move, lost behind the clouds of distant horizons, and as burnt up as was the sky of that afternoon when I came back at the trot from Ascot to my hotel on the banks of the Thames.

On the river were anchored floating house-boats let for families to go into, towed by steamers along the river, as in China, both here and there with the consent of their portable household gods. On the road I saw caravans with chimneys on the roof, wagons in which living and cooking was going on

while they went about from place to place seeking a promised land they never find.

These obscure journeyings in the interior of England pictured to me the relation of the journeying of the English over the world, hunting for money with the idea of attaining the enjoyment of life in worshipping the professional beauty and the thoroughbred. And yet they are the first champions of the civilisation of the world, which proves how God has so often written aright in crooked lines,

## XXIII

### BOAT-RACES—SPORTS

My hotel lay in a delightful corner called Maidenhead, on the Thames above Windsor, where the river is quite narrow and only navigable by means of locks.

The night was falling, and the eight miles of road between Ascot and Maidenhead were like an avenue in a park, in which cottages and palaces disentangled themselves from the thick foliage of the trees. As everybody here has money, houses at Ascot are let for £200 or £300 during the race week. The evening was falling sweetly. On the road I saw the same swarms of blondes—how prolific that race is,—the same suburban character that the country possesses everywhere, the same house-fronts clothed with ivy and creepers, the same cleanliness, the same neatness, the same well-to-do character everywhere. The southern half of England is an immense garden. The window-panes shine like mirrors; and through the windows you see the curve of the curtains revealing warm and comfortable interiors. Outside

verdure and flowers; inside, a warm and snug nursery; children of milk and roses dancing in the road; a tepid atmosphere, a soft twilight. All this pointed out to me one feature of the English character that I cannot allow to be forgotten. It is the tenderness of the "Lake school," from which comes the thick vein of romantic poetry; the tender-hearted sweetness of character, the lovable ingenuousness, the gentle kindness that the Englishmen—and, as is natural, the Englishwomen—possess within them in combination with the energy of bulls. It is related that Rossini, the first time he heard Nilsson, who was a colossal woman, called her a whale that had swallowed a thrush. The English remind me of Rossini. They are Herculean, but they have got a little bird in their breast—or perhaps it may be in the stomach!

They are sentimental. There is no modern lyric poetry in Europe comparable to English poetry. *Elective affinity* is here no mere empty phrase. Marriages take place for this motive, and are not agreed upon by the parents for family convenience as in France. They are romantic by nature. And this is just the very reason why they are headstrong and venturesome, impelled by the thirst of gain and dominated by the vanity of lavishness, as we have seen.

Of all the Europeans that I know there is no doubt that they are the nearest to the barbarian,

in spite of their being advanced in the formalities and exteriors of civilisation, due to a variety of circumstances, the first of which is wealth. They have the blood of a boy: they cannot count five-and-twenty centuries of historical life as we Latin races can. In presence of our venerable age they are mere youths: they have a thousand years less than we have, for it was in the year 450 that the Saxon barbarians established themselves in Great Britain. Years have much to do with it. No wonder, then, that they have the usual defects of ardent youth. No wonder at their blind energy, or almost childish vanity; no wonder they sum up life in two words, *show* and *business*; business, the actual form taken by energy, and show, the almost infantile indulgence of vanity. No wonder at their self-confidence, because they never form an exact idea of what things are. No wonder that, lords of themselves and all, they spend as they earn, without regard to the future. As a rather special care they insure their lives in favour of their children, but as for anything else the obligation of the parents ceases with bringing them up and, as soon as they have got wings, letting them out into the world to get their living like their parents. The conservative instinct, the familiar idea of succession, strongly rooted in property, this old inheritance of ancient races they do not possess, because they are new in the world, and, what is more than this, they have been

endowed with an incomparably fortunate lot. And if even in the bosom of the family they have little idea of solidarity, how can anything of the kind be imagined of them among different classes as a nation? Each one takes his own part; it was for this that arms were given him: it is the rule. "Life is a conflict" is the fundamental principle of a society which, as far as itself goes, even yet remains essentially within the shade of barbarian ideas. Hence its power among the civilised; hence its spontaneous charm; hence also the grotesque effect it produces upon us, because these barbarians affect to be civilised in all external matters.

The two or three hundred millions of pounds that England accumulates every year make the rich still richer, and on this account plunge the poor still deeper into misery, in spite of every kind of private and public philanthropy. If life is a conflict there must be those who have been conquered, and the conquered are the vast proletariat that forms the base of the edifice of plutocracy, because this idea of wealth is a relative one. In a society poor in itself, but where fortune is equally divided, all are rich; in a society where ostentation and self-indulgence increase in the cubic ratio of that of those who have less, misery is insupportable.

The day passed in these reflections. We arrived at Maidenhead. We dined, talked, and slept, and

on the following morning there was a regatta going on along the river covered with boats. Along the banks were steam-launches loaded with people and decked with festoons and flowers. Some distance off there was lying at anchor one of those summer house-boats, and the open windows, all on one level, were adorned with *misses*; on the deck upon the roof, converted into a garden, was a promenade. Electric launches, destitute of a sickly plume of smoke, glided silently and rapidly like insects on the water. Beyond and further down is the railway bridge, on which at every instant sounds a roll like thunder and passes a dark cloud scattering sparks: it is the train. The day is hot and damp. The sky is lowering, and at times there is a little shower. The regatta has already begun. My neighbour on the balcony of the hotel said to me enthusiastically, speaking of the muscle of the young rowers: "Sport is our substitute for the obligatory military service of continental nations. With the resources we possess, if it were not for physical exercise we should have already fallen into decay. With our exuberant temperament, if it were not for *sport* everybody would slide into orgy. It is necessary to make the body tired in order to strengthen it. Training is the only thing that builds it up. Splendid fellows!"

Indeed there was flowing in their veins the blood of the Scandinavian rovers, of the Norsemen Vikings, the pirates that descended from



the sombre regions of the North Sea in pursuit of prey round the coast of Europe. The water of the river seemed to bend like a bow beneath their athletic energy, and to open itself, clear and crystalline, confusedly and almost ironically, to let pass this procession of people rudely strong, dull, and solid.

Sport indeed saves them from falling into brutality. They row, they skate, they play at cricket and football, they ride, run, hunt the fox at home, the tiger in India, the buffalo in America, the elephant at the Cape on the backs of ostriches, instead of thoroughbreds that jump hedges and brooks, in a sort of perpetual steeple-chase, which is the programme of their existence.

*Splendid fellows !*

They are brought up in games from the first. The end they have in view is not to produce intellectual instruments ; it is to form healthy and active individuals, sound and Herculean, brave and good Englishmen, useful, serviceable, truthful, honest gentlemen, and Christians, without the theorizing conjectures that the race so much dislikes. The teaching in the schools is all practical and applied ; and at the universities, instead of academies of theoretical science, there are colleges in which the sons of rich families prepare themselves for the life of enjoyment and ostentation that they hope for. The law of

inheritance, in their aristocratic society in which families have much offspring, causes one son, the eldest, to inherit the property and the others to be at liberty to roam about the world to get wealth wherewith they may come back again to their own country to found new houses and end their life in the bosom of the luxury in which they were born. There are special schools for the applied education of future emigrants each in his own line, giving them facts and information patiently and carefully amassed. This is the luggage they set out with; it is not an education that they carry. It is the instrument; not the mere idea. Knowledge does not constitute an end; it is only the means of getting money, and perhaps hardly even that. The professions called "liberal" on the Continent are here carried on commercially. Legal and medical men and engineers are really commercial guilds. Mercury touches everything with his wand. Mercury has wings on his feet, he leaps and comes and goes throughout the world like they do, carrying everywhere audacious boldness and powerful tenacity. Do many die in the fight? So much the better; the race is thus purified by selection, and every fresh birth is more fitted to scrape up everywhere whatever may be profitable.

Plato considered as irreconcilable the two qualities of thinker and athlete. Now the English are incontestably a race of athletes.

## XXIV

### POLITICS—WESTMINSTER AND THE LAW-COURTS

EVERYTHING in England, absolutely everything, is turned into *sport*. Ever since they have formulated existence as a battle and invented the law of the "struggle for life," expressing in this doctrine of raw naturalism the deepest constitutional instinct of their mind, there is no wonder that the idea of strife inspires the acts of the English from the beginning to the end. The want of figurative conception forbids them to perceive things in the classic continental way; they do not perceive the principle of harmony presiding over the world, being hardly able to perceive the contrasts that there are in phenomena.

Everything is *sport*, that is to say, it is an exercise for the purpose of nourishing the strength of full-blooded constitutions, instead of being an endeavour to fit the individual for the attainment of a higher end. Let us take an example. The Frenchman works, associates, and saves money—for what object? To get together a house and a family to whom he may leave the fruit of his toil.

On the other hand, the Englishman never acts up to the more abstract idea of family ; he works and earns because he has the restless spirit begotten of a kind that knows not how to contemplate. He works and earns from the same motive that afterwards makes him squander without care for the heritage of his children. Let them go their own way. Drilled and equipped for the battle of life, he sends them out into the world to fight it.

Another example is politics. Of all the different British games, the game of politics is the most attractive. The way they have of looking politics in the face explains the singular differences of fact when what happens here is compared with what passes on the other side of the Channel. On the Continent political action is always subordinated to theoretical ideas or to the point of honour ; here it is a contest and a game of the character essential to athletic games. Political interests draw the sword and individual energies carry on the debate. The way in which it is carried on does not offend and is not affected, as would happen among continental people, among whom the spirit of sociability predominates. Two boxing champions may slit up each other's faces, but there is no enmity on this account. Similarly in politics the greatest insults are admitted. It is fair warfare. The point of honour does not arise when there are no social instincts. Thus duelling is a thing unknown, and the greatest affronts are either

swallowed whole or are dissected in the public courts.

On this account the practice of British parliamentary customs, when servilely imitated by nervously susceptible Continentals, has caused either angry personal dislikes and antagonisms, or what is worse still, a total want of respect. We are unable to understand how men can insult one another in public *politically* and for *sport*, while they continue to hold one another in estimation as soon as they get out of the House or the Committee-room, as happens here, and on this account parliamentary debates are often followed on the Continent by duels, or even get to be a mere vile sink into which the want of political respect drags them to the discredit of the system of debate. Here, on the contrary, no one loses caste either by the affronts he gives, or by those he takes. It is as in war; they do not change countenance, and the House applauds the strongest or the cleverest. Politics are the chief game.

And indeed there is no more complete and accomplished player at the game than the "Grand Old Man," Gladstone, who is even at this hour stumping England in the electoral campaign destined to overturn the Salisbury ministry. Why? Why for no reason at all: because he will do exactly the same himself; there is only one pretty nearly all-round policy for Britain to follow—what she can. Above all the old questions, the

one that hovers most to and fro, like the *fate* of ancient tragedy, is the social question, that is to say, that which in modern times corresponds to the servile wars that formed so important a factor in the Roman republic.

Gladstone's victory is certain, because the British have made a favourite of him. Portraits of the Grand Old Man are about; in his philanthropical chimeras, in the narrowness and want of comprehensive spirit in his talent, in his almost miraculous activity, in his nerve, in his phenomenal energy at eighty years old, constantly perambulating Great Britain, being present at meetings, to-day cheered, and to-morrow pelted with potatoes and brickbats to cleave his head open; in the intervals retiring to his country house and employing his leisure in felling trees, a sort of political Titan, or parliamentary Hercules, with a sharp face, old-fashioned collars, and an historical physiognomy in which Britain venerates declining Puritanism in ecstasies of wonder before the inexhaustible flow of speech that the lips of Gladstone produce when they are agitated.

My steps were next directed to Westminster Palace, built close to the old Abbey near the side of the Thames, whose leaden waters reflect the towers and pinnacles, the pilasters and traceries, of this enormous mountain of stone set up for the parliamentary dwelling-place.

Westminster, and the Law-Courts at Temple Bar

eastward at the end of the Strand, are the principal buildings of modern London. In imperially lodging the Parliament and the Law-Courts the British people manifested its reverence for the two fundamental institutions of the national life. And the architects, in designing these two buildings conformably to the English traditions of the times of the two queens, Elizabeth and Anne, consecrated by their work the reign of the third great queen, Victoria.

This architecture of the Law-Courts near Temple Bar (I think I have already mentioned) harmonises with the British climate and effects; but in the special case we are now speaking of it does more. A palace in the English style, it does not possess the simplicity and harmony of classical buildings; it is an aggregation of towers, roofs, porticos, and passages, irregular, unsymmetrical, and capable either of being left just as it is or of being indefinitely added to. And this is just like the English laws, in which every case and every sentence form precedents, in which there are no general principles or systematic codification; so that they consist of a mass of maxims, dates, precedents, and cases, in which the patience of the lawyer, and still more that of the client, is as much lost as my eyes were in contemplating the immense pile near Temple Bar.

Then, again, there is no distinction observed between public and private architecture, just in the

same way that British legislation, which has never acquired the structural lines of systematic design, is still confused with the primitive origins of patriarchal right. The Law-Courts could just as well serve for the home of justice as for the ancient and magnificent habitation of a feudal seigneur. There are castellated towers, lofty roofs crowned with tympana, loop-holes in the angles of the projecting turrets, numerous bay windows, decorated arches, dark courts, and corridors that seem entrances to an old fortress with its drawbridge and armour-clad bowmen on each side.

It is indeed immense, but a Continental only receives impressions of grandeur from that which is neatly and regularly proportioned. Size is a secondary question. The Parthenon, which had no superior in magnificence, was very small.

In presence of Westminster the case is different. The architectural conception was formulated right off at once, and the façade, advancing between the two towers up to the river-side and stooping down to the water's edge, has the overwhelming grandeur of a gigantic edifice almost Oriental—Assyrian or Babylonian—in spite of details. Looking some distance off at this enormous mountain of stone, in one block as it were, and covering four acres of ground, and darting into the air the reflections of its gildings, the resulting impression is strongly accentuated. If it does not raise the spirit as far as enthusiasm, as is the case in the presence of sublime



conceptions of genius, one is obliged to bow humbly before a so great manifestation of strength.

When seen close to, the persistent repetition and perpetual copying of the same lines and designs are fatiguing. Between the gigantic pinnacles that rise up crowned with terminals are enormous windows bordered with stonework, in order to distribute sufficiently into the interior the hazy light of these leaden skies. The same traceries, the same decorations, the same columns and landings, baldacchini, roses, and imitations of the vegetable kingdom; all those reasons that make the façades of these edifices like an immense dry leaf are reproduced so often that they fatigue, so great is the extent of the building.

The ogival style does not admit of repetition. A colonnade or an arch may be reproduced and prolonged indefinitely, but the same does not succeed with *Gothic* façades. On this account, considering the large proportions of Westminster Palace, the idea of following in it the neighbouring type of the ancient Abbey, naturally gave rise to a conspicuously monotonous building. When, as I did, one makes the circuit of the enormous edifice, of which the mass inspires one with ideas of terror and the distant perspectives dazzle, one ends with being fatigued with the rather feeble design, and disappointed with the so great monotony.

## XXV

### PARLIAMENT—HOME RULE

BEFORE visiting the Houses of Parliament they showed me the great hall that serves for political trials. This immense hall is magnificent of its kind. I say *of its kind*, because I prefer marble halls without domestic *comfort*, but evidently built for solemn proceedings and in full communication with light and air; Westminster Hall has characters in common with the dwellings of those who are obliged to live in a state of divorce from ambient nature. They told me that the magnificent roof of carved chestnut, a dark roof that absorbs the light, dates from the eleventh century.

All round the hall the wainscots of carved wood clothe the walls up to a certain height, and above they are covered with sallow gilt leather hangings, or red tapestries falling in heavy folds. Lustres descend from the roof. Through the stained-glass windows flows dimly an unnatural light, with violently contrasted tones of gold or scarlet, green or violet. These harsh tones and the violent contrasts of *chiaroscuro* are indispensable

in proportion as we miss our own golden baths of the fiery sun's rays, in order to inspire a grandeur that the sky does not possess ; borrowing from the inventions of art and profession that which Nature has distributed liberally and gratuitously in the glorious atmospheres of the South. The waves of our light are reproduced in diamonds, rubies, sapphires, and emeralds.

The halls of the two Chambers are of equal size. I saw that of the Commons, where they were sitting to-day. The impression was the same as that of the great hall ; one is *at home*, in a rich home where no comfort is wanting, and where profusion takes a grave kind of air, but still one is at home and not in a temple. The Roman Senate, having at one end the altar of Victory, before which incense burnt and the senators took oath with their right hands extended, must have been precisely the opposite of this pretty darkened room, in which a few gentlemen, sitting with their hats on, were hearing a colleague speak.

The members number 670, but the sittings are often suspended because the number present falls below the quorum, which is 40. The benches were almost completely empty. These benches, disposed like an amphitheatre, fill up three sides of the hall, which is an oblong rectangle. The members have no places to write upon ; they have chairs on, and they lay their notes upon their knees. Half-way up the walls, above the amphitheatre,

projects the visitors' gallery. The sessions are not public. There are the same roofs carved in dark wood, the same hangings, the same casings of exquisite carving, and the same tapestries, on which the coloured light from the stained glass rests in spots of many colours.

In front, instead of the altar of Victory, is the chair of the Speaker, a personage of nasal voice, and of white wig in conformity with precedent. One is struck by this grotesque love of the Englishman for the farrago of a burlesque, by the contrast it presents to the unceremonious manner in which the members go in and out with their hats on their heads, as though they were in the street. I am not one of those whose voices are heard against the value of *outside show* in public functions. It is unhappily the truth that man has to be impressed with sentiments and wheedled by tradition in order that he may be put under rule. But the Speaker's wig gave me as great offence as the historic dress of the Beef-eaters at the Tower. It is a caricature. The first condition of *outside show* is to create an atmosphere of respect. But if in the House one is just as in the street, if there is no tribune, and therefore no abuse of the privilege of speech, for what exists, what is the use of, the Speaker's wig?

Whoever wishes to speak uncovers his head and rises on his feet, but he speaks in his place. In front of the Speaker's chair and below it lies

crossways the table for the officials of the House ; and between the two lateral amphitheatres in the upper half of the hall is the large table, at the sides of which the Ministers sit.

At this sitting Mr. Balfour spoke, asking the House to push on so as to get through the measures promised in the Queen's Speech, as the Parliament was near dissolution, and a new one near election. It was no news, but it was the first official intimation of the event. On this account there were some fifty or sixty people in the House, and they were listening to the words of the Minister, who was already openly considered as a man beaten at the political game. Nobody doubted that Gladstone would be victorious. The nerves of everybody were on the stretch for the electoral contest. Parliament was at its last gasp, and on that account every member wanted to see passed some little measure necessary to give him influence among his particular constituency.

Colonel Nolan, who kindly got me admitted to the part of the gallery reserved for diplomatists, did me the favour to provide me with the order of the day, and the texts of the bills. I have preserved these documents. The minute precision of the drawing up of the laws and their conciseness are models. They are models in the preambles that precede them. There is no wordiness so known among ourselves, or almost childish exhibitions at times of knowledge out-at-the-elbows, or of some

theory cut out with the scissors. Everything is rapid, precise, neat, and practicable. Of the same kind are the speeches. Few words and short. Speeches three days long, or even three hours long, are absent ; there is nobody to make them, because there is nobody with the patience to listen to them. On this account the amount they get through in a session is extraordinary. Half the time is not consumed in unforeseen incidents beside the order of the day, because there are no questions put to the Ministers without previous notice and inclusion in the catalogue of the day's work. The sheet I have before me for the 13th of June enumerates not less than forty-four questions to Ministers, besides forty-nine bills, whereof twenty-one were of Government origin. Committees are at work during the session. Members are in and out of them continually. The sittings last long hours both before and after dinner, for the members dine within the building itself. It appears that it is the best place in London for dining. The ladies come and keep their husbands company, and it is very diverting—*jolly*.

The law that provoked some discussion on the day when I went, was about the schools in Ireland. One of the constitutional sores of England was touched in one of the burning questions of the present day ; and it caused all the greater thrill as Gladstone had made out of Home Rule for Ireland the platform of the electoral campaign—which was

absorbing the attention of all, and of which the debates of this dying Parliament were nothing more than echoes, and of no greater reality.

Among the constitutional questions now before Great Britain figures in the first place *Home Rule*, or the autonomy of Ireland, not so much for what it is worth in itself, as for what it explains of the meaning of similar questions. The particular problem of Ireland is being solved from day to day by emigration, which depopulates the country parts, where the masters of the soil are substituting grazing for agriculture. But the Home Rule of to-day, as Gladstone boldly stated in his Edinburgh speech, does not merely mean the giving or withholding satisfaction to Irish notions of self-government, but in fact ascertaining whether Britain will continue to go on along the path of centralisation, after the continental manner, as the preservation of her empire beyond sea demands of her ; or whether, turning her back upon this modern mode of thought, she will go back to local tradition, consecrating it in federative constitutional forms in imitation of the United States, the new American Britain.

The Home Rule for Ireland that Gladstone discoursed upon in Edinburgh was a body of institutions identical with those of autonomous colonies, with their own finances, taxes, and executive. And speaking in the capital of Scotland, the Grand Old Man said that if Scotland also wanted Home Rule she should have it.

The chimæra of a federal metropolis ruling a vast empire beyond sea lays bare the point of the crisis at which Great Britain was forced to arrive, and in which she finds herself. On one hand the temperament of the race, unsophisticated and individually exuberant, and on the other hand the tradition of a history in which the nationalities bound up in the United Kingdom have not arrived at the point of fusion and reciprocal penetration, are calling on Radicalism to join the federal idea. But the notion is fundamentally at variance, in the first place, with the economic revolution that has transformed Britain into a bank and workshop for the exploitation of the world on which she is dependent for food ; and in the second place, with the fact of political dominion exercised in every part of the globe, in an empire cut up into bits for which union and guaranteed stability are of the first importance, and with the maintenance of a supremely strong army and navy.

History as a whole, coming to the aid of the most elementary common-sense, shows us that the Imperialism of Great Britain is the necessary consequence of her system of trade, and of the vastness of her dominions, telling us that on the day when she should show a desire to turn towards federative *Puritanism*, on that same day, amid the shouts of the whole world, her political influence would have fallen.



## XXVI

### FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

ANOTHER problem is simply that of the preservation and exploration of the empire beyond sea. There are not wanting those who, arguing from the example of the United States, advocate the doctrine of abstention in presence of the separatist tendencies of the colonies. As a nation Britain would do the same for the people that parents would for their children—teach them, bring them up, and then start them on their own account; the lot which the United States had at the end of the last century, and the future looked forward to by whatever other colonies may wish to become independent. As a creator and nourisher of nations, England ought never again to commit the error of opposition to their emancipation; on the other hand, she ought to favour it. And with regard to the other countries subject to British rule, the same doctrine holds good. The day they reject the protection of Britain, leave them to the lot they prefer. Does India wish for Russia? In this case Gladstone once did not hesitate to declare

that if this really was the case the best thing was to fold hands and let the natives become Russians. This paradoxical consequence of the bristly theories of the Grand Old Man was not useless to him, by the way. The Englishman does not take what is said literally: he only regards what is done.

He considers the most singular statements of political adversaries as material for *sport*. He neither makes anything out of it nor loses anything by it, but instinct tells him that above all the extravagances of men of theory there is yet in force the irresistible strength of facts, both for these same men and for the whole nation.

The well-trying proof of what I say is that which is now happening in this very same train of ideas with the question of the occupation of Egypt. The entire Radical party protests against it. Gladstone very recently stated that he would proceed to evacuation, but one may safely prophesy that he will never make such a mistake again. The *Imperial* policy, proclaimed theatrically by Disraeli, when Queen Victoria was crowned Empress of India, is the only policy possible.

Nations, under the pain of death, cannot abdicate; for suicide is scarcely recognised as a case within the sphere of individual liberty. Then the idea of giving to the natives of India the choice of their protector is no other than an extravagance of the timid philanthropic opinion of the *Old Man*,

who in this instance we can only consider great by recognising him as the representative of a very considerable, perhaps even a predominant, part of British individual opinion. Do not, however, fall into the mistake of confusing the total balance of individual opinions with the constructive instinct of a nation. As a matter of fact, the British are abstentionists, but the collective sentiment is Imperial.

It is so, and it will be so all the more in proportion to the loss, if the situation towards which the East is tending be reached. Already in Burmah the British Empire is co-terminous with the French possessions of Tonkin and Annam. Already on the plains of the Pamirs and in Afghanistan British and Russians are knocking against one another, front to front, in their energetic expansion. Does the British Empire threaten to come to ruin? No, but it would fall to the ground the moment that it lost command of the road to the East that it holds in successive stages—Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Egypt, Aden, this chain of fortresses, acquired, some by force, others by purchase, and others by artifice, now, since Egypt and the Suez Canal have become British, holding the clue that leads to the valley of the Nile. Evacuation is a joke and nothing else.

If I were a Briton I should applaud with both hands and feet the policy of Beaconsfield, so evidently sound that it convinced the best of the

Whigs, dividing the party; the Unionist group of Hartington and Chamberlain uniting itself to the Tories of the Salisbury administration. There remained with the *Old Man* the extreme tail of the party, which even now is doubling itself to bite him by the snaky mouths of one or two of his party. If I were a Briton I should run along with the current of opinion, that instead of setting its eyes upon the future emancipation of the colonies, takes the other side by defending the policy of entering into closer relations with them, opposing to the Radical principle of protection of the European nations of the Continent, and the Americanism of the Munroe doctrine proclaimed in the MacKinley tariff, a *Zollverein* or Customs' league on the governments scattered throughout the British national and colonial territories.

Only in this manner can the British Isles be considered in the character of a metropolis. If the colonies were emancipated and foreign nations protected by a judicious political economy, Britain, without markets for the produce of her industry or freights for her ships, and having to buy, almost all her food, would be condemned to ruin. A grave symptom and proof of what I say consists, even already, in the sensible stationary condition of exports and the lowering of freights, and harbours filled with steamers getting rusty.

In order to make clearer this important point in

the situation of Great Britain, my readers must forgive me if I enter upon some corroborating facts, with their respective figures. Nothing speaks more eloquently than facts.

The sum total of the foreign trade of Great Britain in 1890 was £743,000,000, of which £420,000,000 were imports and £323,000,000 exports. The deficit of £97,000,000—let us say £100,000,000, is derived from the excessive amount of food and raw material that British stomachs and manufactories do not and cannot meet with within their own islands. Of this deficit, one-half, or £50,000,000, is paid to the United States, principally for purchase of wheat and cotton, after accounting for the exports of manufactured goods. But these exports are diminishing, while the imports cannot diminish, unless Britain obtain in her own colonies, instead of buying from foreigners, the food and raw material she wants. Then in 1890 the total trade of the colonies amounted to £204,000,000, among which Australasia figures for £133,000,000, South Africa for £15,000,000, and North America for £56,000,000. But of the total of £204,000,000 the relations with the mother-country count for scarcely £91,000,000, while there are £113,000,000 with British possessions and foreign markets. If in Australia these last represent scarcely £16,000,000 among a total of £133,000,000, and if in South Africa they represent only

£2,000,000 among a total of £15,000,000, in Canada the proportions alter. Among a total of £56,000,000, half is foreign; and the most serious part of it is that foreign commercial relations seem to increase while national ones decline. From £15,000,000 in 1875 there are scarcely £10,000,000 in 1890, while in the same period foreign trade went up from £26,000,000 to £46,000,000.

The establishment of differential duties is the remedy proposed to nationalise colonial commerce, by allowing the mother-country to obtain sufficient food and raw material within the area of her dominions and free herself from dependence on foreigners. The imperial *Zollverein* is, as is obvious, the external policy of Great Britain, which in its turn depends essentially on the centralised or federalised rule that the constitution of the United Kingdom may take. But in the system of internal questions constitutional policy is intimately and directly bound up with the protectionism required by the agricultural interest, but condemned by industry and the operative as making living dear: it is bound up with the political Jacobinism of the extreme left or *Whig*, and with the socialism of the poor, who ask for laws of protection and emancipation.

There is no proof that Britain is entering upon a scheme of rural protection like the French, because British agriculture is condemned by the

transformation of the mother-country into the bank and workshop of a great empire; but this proper fact enlarges the proportions and increases the gravity of the Jacobinism and socialism.

In the country the landlords are daily losing their influence at the same time that the enlargement of the electoral census increases the number of rural votes. The majority of the landlords are Conservative, but the majority of the voters are Radical or at least Liberal. England formerly succeeded in realising a reproduction of republican and senatorial Rome, a democracy governed by an aristocracy. Opinion ruled, but the great governed. The old families provided the staff necessary for public administration, ministers, deputies, generals, diplomatists. To-day the case is entirely different. With the expanse of empire and the accumulation of riches in the normal rule of competition and natural selection, the tolerably successful middle-class disappeared both in county and in town, and at the same time the historic aristocracy yielded its dominion to a plutocracy. The vast and solid stratum of small rural landlords, the social base of the French nation, gives stability to her democracy by arming it against the popular discord and anarchist hallucination of the poor of the towns. In England, where the many poor are in agitation against a rich minority, democracy alone

encounters a shield against revolutionary anarchism in the good phlegmatic sense of the national character and their apathy to generalised theoretical ideas.

But the real plainness of this social situation shows, without needing further explanation, how the field is open to the socialist and demagogue sower, and how the consequence of such a condition is the confusion and weakness of the historic political parties. History has now changed. The English Conservative spirit, from which is derived the aphorism *Nolumus leges Angliæ mutari*, has come to an end. If Imperialism and an inclination to State socialism, as in Germany, will resuscitate the *Tory* party, it is certain that its aristocratic origin will prejudice its action. On the other hand, it is certain that the *Whigs* are in truth but the *wigs* of their individualist and philanthropic Radicalism, since the age of Puritanism ceased in England, cast under by the interests of a huge empire and harassed by the selfish contests between the two opposing industrial classes, masters and workmen. The old parties, almost extinct a century after they originated, have, as a matter of fact, come to an end, although just for the present they may preserve their names through the personal influence of chiefs born after the deaths of their prototypes, like Gladstone, who indisputably survives. English democracy will, however,



encounter a new programme and party to satisfy both the external requirements of Imperialism and the internal necessities of the ardent strife of the industrial proletariat, avoiding the simultaneous dangers from the demagogue and the anarchist, as much doomed to extinction as the out-of-date revival of *Whig* Puritanism, or of the *wig*.

## XXVII

### THE WORKING CLASSES—TRADES UNIONS

AS is known, in England the *meeting* carries on its work side by side with Parliament, like the Roman *comitia*, which was a sort of representative institution by the side of the Senate. It is at meetings that public opinion defines and formulates itself, and just as there were in the Roman forum regular orators in political life or the courts of law, so it is in Hyde Park, where every day there are numbers of small *comitia*. The orator mounts on a bench upon the turf and his auditors form a circle round. The business is, as a rule, either religious or political.

One day, walking in the Park, I stopped to examine this phenomenon, and the first exhibition I saw was three lank individuals like pine-trees, tall, with red hair and skin, and with long black overcoats falling from their shoulders, singing psalms. The audience around of about a hundred persons, mostly women and children, seemed to me indifferent, and at times even disposed to jest. In another place was an old white-bearded man

with an open Bible in his hand reading texts and making pious and philanthropic comments in a country accent, with an occasional querulous drawl. It was comic and produced little effect. I only saw two poor old people listening to him, besides a group of the mirthful making faces at him. However, further on I saw a large assemblage, and heard a considerable noise with shouts and bursts of laughter, with sometimes howls and sometimes bursts of merriment. What was it? I got near, elbowing the crowd on one side in order to get near the speaker.

He was a young workman, dressed, as they all do, in middle-class clothes, coat and billycock hat, and was speaking with an impetuosity, a fluency, and a piquancy truly remarkable. His speech spun out a long string of cases commented upon in parables. He did not argue ratiocinatively and inductively: he spoke to the practical mind, to the sentiment, to the humour of his audience. The subject was the elections. For whom ought the workmen to vote? whom prefer?—the Whigs or the Tories.

“Mr. Gladstone’s people,” said the speaker, “accuse Lord ——” (I do not remember what Lord) “of paying five hundred pounds a year to his head stableman. But what have we got to do with that? Let him spend his money as he likes. I say now that the case of Messrs. —— and Co., the manufacturers of preserves, who have

carriages, servants, and horses at the cost of the work of hundreds of factory hands that they get the very most out of, imposing upon them a day of eleven hours, and giving them ten shillings a week for wages, is ever so much worse." ("Hear, hear!" shouted the assembly.) "And — and Co. are among the friends of Mr. Gladstone. Is it from the Radicals that we have anything to hope for? No, nothing!"

In point of fact, Gladstone was giving Home Rule as a platform for the elections without pronouncing upon social questions, especially upon the eight hours a day. And this cost him so much loss of advertisement that at the last hour he altered his course and pronounced openly for the legal day's work on the principle of the three eights: eight hours for the education of the workman, eight for rest, and eight for earning bread with his wages.

There cannot be a more eloquent proof of the decisive influence that the working classes had in the elections of that year, and not so much by the coming forward of candidates who in the next Parliament will constitute the Labour party, as because, owing to the extended franchise, the poorer classes are the decisive element in the party contests at elections now almost completely transformed into a matter of attachment to a particular person. In face of the plutocracy that has taken the place of the historic rural aristocracy, is being raised the broad column of the poor voters

demanding a better plateful at the banquet of life. And the proof of the reason with which they demand it (I do not mean to say of the good sense of everything they ask for) is to be found in the proportions of official relief in England.

On the day I returned from Gravesend in the steamer I had a long conversation with an old house-carpenter going up to London. He seemed a religious man.

"It costs less to live for two persons than for one's self alone," said the poor man, who for that reason got married like all the rest. "I ha'e a wife o' my ain. But this consolation does not last long. Children come to town with disastrous rapidity, and for the next twelve or fifteen years it is impossible to save a penny. After this there comes a relief, when the eldest can go out and earn something. Many a mickle makes a muckle. It is the happy time, in the decline of which are the traces of coming misery. Age comes on, the body gets weary, and strength grows less. Employers look with less confidence on hairs getting grey and on the curved chest, and hesitate to take us on. I have seen one who offered two shillings or half-a-crown less than the regular wages of the trade. Earn less—wait a minute—the work is easier. The table, however, getting continually scantier, we come to the melancholy conclusion that old age, the winter of life, is already knocking at the door. Up to a certain time children were

excellent for old people: but now they are all going far away to get a living. Formerly they used to send some money home, but now—they have already got sweethearts; now they get married and have children of their own, and cannot spare a penny. It is even fortunate if the day does not come when one has to take back home a daughter knocking at the door with a baby in her arms."

And the carpenter, after describing in this fashion the typical picture of a workman's life, perhaps relating his own history, let his head fall upon his breast—who knows why? Perhaps remembering the day when Ellen left at home the result of her affections and went away again flapping her wings. Poor old man!

In England there has never been anything like the upheaval of the great revolution copied later on by the Latin races; there were never completely destroyed the old trade corporations, or *guilds*, in the name of a false liberty conceived by dry jurists. From the historic *guilds* there arose in the first quarter of the century the *Trades Unions*; and on these trade corporations have been created the latest *Unions*, extended to all kinds of workmen.

From the laws of 1825 dates the modern era of *trades unions*. The years 1833-34, with their general strikes, are for the modern combinations like 1889 and the famous dock strike were for the

new unionism, in which were united not only skilled handicraftsmen but mere labourers, skilled labour and unskilled. Mr. Thomas Burt is the principal figure in the former movement, while Mr. John Burns is the leader of modern unionism.

The appearance of Thomas Burt is at the same time manly and ingenuous, kind and generous. A working pitman, he educated himself in the intervals of work like Stephenson. The preponderating influence and authority he gained among the mining population, initiating and organising the syndicate of workmen's associations, establishing fixed payments, having even in 1871 united and disciplined 17,000 members, obtained for the society an annual income of £10,000, with a reserve of £25,000. Preaching teetotalism, the great friend of the British workman, attracting the workmen into the way of good habits, and inspiring them with a consciousness of their own strength through a comprehension of their own duty; all this long work of regeneration, in which the solid qualities of the English mind showed themselves uppermost, caused him in 1873, being then thirty-seven years old, to be elected member of Parliament by the miners. An income (necessary for a workman) was paid him out of the fund of the union. And from 1873 till now Mr. Burt has kept his seat in Parliament, in spite of repeated disagreements brought about among his electors. A new rumour of social war agitated the poorer classes, but Mr.

Burt, faithful to his former ideas, always sets against it his conviction that it is by education, by association, by co-operation, and by pacific movements of a similar kind, that the problems affecting the present will be solved in the future. The Conservative idea took shape in the very bosom of the masses. The English instinct of prudence was enabled to keep within bounds for a time.



## XXVIII

### THE NEW UNIONISM

THE great stock argument against trades unions is that, instituted on capitalist models as a means of precaution, they have turned Conservative. Temporary aid, rehabilitation, pensions, and funerals, every kind of actual and guaranteed assistance giving security to the actual living of workmen, strayed out of the way of their proper exertions for the sake of emancipating them as a class. The benefits actually attained were pernicious because they got no further than resignation to lot.

For some time the *trades unions*, succeeding the historical *guilds*, were corporations of handicrafts, and left out in the cold the vast and wretched legion of those who relied on the mere strength of their arms, the *unskilled labourers*, to do as best they could.

The great dock strike in London in 1889 initiates a new period. Work at the docks is the last refuge for the shipwrecked of society. He who has never seen a multitude of the miserable crowding round the gates every morning, begging an alms

in the shape of a day's work, has never got an intimate notion of what misfortune there is in the world, or of the extravagance at the top of society resulting from the contrast of the social elements. A Dante in our times would place scenes of this kind in the last circle of his Inferno.

There hovers in the air an atmosphere of vice, one breathes the full acrid fume of miserable dirtiness, one sees the foul rags and tatters of civilised life. The multitude of pariahs come from every part; there are sons of the soil whose arms the unkind earth rejects; there are town lads who have gone under in the strife of unseemly competition; there are bankrupt shop-keepers, workmen out of employ, old soldiers, clerks, all classes, mingled in the hunger that makes all alike, amid a dense multitude of drunken vagabonds from the quarters of the East End, like repulsive savages, with down-cast eyes, scarred flesh, ragged clouts, in the hope of earning some pence at carrying loads in order afterwards to spend the money in making beasts of themselves in the gin palace in the Commercial Road.

Mr. Burns is called the apostle of the new unionism that was the outcome of the colossal strike of 1889, and that in the following year succeeded in making the Congress of Liverpool, although presided over by Mr. Burke, vote the legal day of eight hours. The new idea of the masses asserting themselves arose, then, out of

the more historical existence of the corporations of handicraft; and from the more private and conservative boundaries of the English mind it went out into the open field of the brotherhood of all kinds of toil, handicraft or muscular, skilled or unskilled, and to the dimensions of a general and revolutionary war of the poorest classes against capitalism, after the manner of the Continent.

The dominant idea up to that time was the old-fashioned *self-help*, individualism, each one to take care of himself without caring how things went on behind his back. In Liverpool the ruling opinion was, on the other hand, a government socialism in many aspects like the French or German. The Congress voted the advisability of creating funds from labour, a thing disliked by the old unions of handicraftsmen, the usefulness of the establishment of municipal or communal labour bureaux, and finally the necessity of a law made by Act of Parliament to fix eight hours as the legal day's work. There were represented at the Congress of Liverpool all trades unions; that is to say, the fourth, or perhaps fifth, part of the whole number of these associations, old and new. But the question of the day of eight hours (which, by the way, Gladstone compromised himself by proposing in Parliament) raised serious opposition among the operatives themselves, to whom it often meant a reduction in wages. Thus the Congress of November 1891

passed a motion contrary to the resolutions of the previous year in Liverpool.

Be what it may, the new unionism gave a new feature to the movement of the British poorest class, stimulating even the existence of the old institutions, and impressing the unity of a single plan of action on that which was before a mere set of defensive institutions of particular classes of workmen. One of the most general characters and one most pregnant with the symptoms of the evolution of the *trades unions* in these last years is, indeed, the fusion and successive amalgamation by reason of the similarity of trades. Thus the total number of societies has not increased, but they have very much increased their proportions. In 1861 there were 2000 societies with a million members, and now the number of societies is not greater, but that of the members has tripled or quadrupled. The engineers, for example, numbered 33,000 members in 1869, and 67,800 in 1890. The carpenter and cabinet-makers went up from 9305 to 31,784, the tailors from 3994 to 15,276, and so on in proportion. These notes that I here collect are from the book by G. W. Howell, a member of Parliament, and formerly a stone-mason; the title of it is *Trade Unionism New and Old*.

The fused societies transformed themselves into lodges, or branches of the central office; thus the carpenters and cabinet-makers have 501 lodges, the tailors 355, and the engineers 497, whereof 418

are in the United Kingdom, 42 in the United States, 32 in British colonies, and the remainder in foreign countries.

From these facts there are two considerations to be drawn, whichever of them may be the more weighty. The first is that modern unionism has united into one body all the members of each handicraft, going over the head of mere local distinctions, a very grave fact for the strategy of the strikes, or campaigns of the social war. The second is that in spite of the enrolment of the labourers in the fighting army of the British poor, the organisation still maintains its traditional features, resting on classification by trades. This circumstance is decisive for the future of the campaigns, since there are not the general revolutionary associations of the Continent, where the abstract sentiment predominates, and where political fishers in troubled waters easily insinuate themselves.

The subscription varies according to the different societies, but the least is altogether a shilling a week. If we reckon three millions of members we get an annual income of eight million pounds. This is nothing wonderful. Thirteen societies, the engineers', the boiler-makers', the locksmiths', the foundrymen's, the pattern-makers', the smiths', the carpenters', the stone-masons', the bricklayers', the tailors', the compositors', the printers', and the carriage-builders', that in 1869 received £192,787, received in 1889 the sum of £531,486. The receipts

nearly tripled themselves, while on the other hand the expenses diminished in proportion. In 1869 they were £225,468, in 1879, £614,417, and in 1889, £388,054. Just as the proportions of the societies increase, the expenditure lessens ; so that in the same measure that the strength of the associations augments, the frequency diminishes of strikes, the cause of enormous expenses, like those which caused the unusual expenditure of 1879.

In the same three years, 1869, 1879, and 1889, respectively, the balance in the till, or war-chest, of the thirteen societies under notice were £126,422, £309,373, and £623,064. And if the balances continue in the same proportion as the incomes, the present war-chest of the poor British working classes must reach the respectable sum of £10,000,000, or 45,000 contos of reis, reckoning at the par of exchange—which is for us a sad memory of the past.<sup>1</sup>

This circumstance, placed by the side of the trades organisation character of the societies, clearly shows that, whatever be the future of the social war in France or Germany, this future will be different in Great Britain ; just as the genius of the British people is different. Nor do I think that the Frenchified Jacobinism of the extreme tail-end of Radicalism need cause any fear, or that

<sup>1</sup> Our author alludes to the depreciation of the Portuguese exchange from the gold standard equivalent of 4500 reis to the present no standard equivalent of about 6000 reis to £1.—TRANS.

anarchy of the French type stands any chance of bearing fruit either. Moreover, I am not even afraid because it has made its way into France, where democracy is defended by a legion of small rural proprietors, a social rallying-point of the present Republic against the demagogue's influence in the towns, and the political explanation of French rural protection. But a catastrophe of this kind is soon to be feared in Germany, both by the combined idealist and mystic nature of a people capable of producing Anabaptists, and because there Socialism preaches Radicalism through the doctrine of political revolution, crying out for the advent of a socialist State; and the rulers, without being able to withhold action in that direction up to a certain point, have no certain way of maintaining public order other than by military rule.

In England there is no militarism, and, on the other hand, there is scarcely a middle class. The army in the mother-country amounts to scarcely 100,000 men. The Indies, Egypt, and the colonies contain twice as many as the above, counting British and natives, but these forces are of no account for the purpose we are speaking of. In the United Kingdom there are 100,000 regular soldiers; there is no conscription, as people know. Besides these there are 180,000 volunteers, also the militia (the National Guard), which perhaps might be of use in case of invasion, but would

be valueless for that of internal commotions. Militarism does not exist, indeed; but, on the other hand, there is scarcely a middle class of landed proprietors either in town or country.

To take it in its simplest form the situation may be succinctly described as one of plutocracy and an army of poor already armed with political rights. The constitutional victory of the labour party does not appear to me, however, to be difficult to foretell. More difficult is it to say what they will do with the victory when they get it. Will they, in the French or German way, place society upside down, designing some sort of *civitas solis*? Happily for them, they have not the imagination that can produce anything of the kind. The solid qualities of prudence govern them.

My own opinion is that in this type of capitalist society, in which, by the very constitution of it, consequences are better and more completely seen, it will turn out that the question will bring about its own answer. Capital, accumulating to the very utmost, will find itself valueless. Even now discount goes below one per cent. And labour, organised co-operatively, and the operatives, after serving an apprenticeship in facts, will arrive at that which exists in the nature of the circumstances, that is to say, the government of an industrial society and the entire profit of production.



In my opinion, of the three great industrial people of Europe—the British, the French, and the German—it will be the British that will first have to settle the real form of the future society of toil; and this for a simple reason—because they are a people in whom the rational or inventive faculties count for less, while, at the same time, they are the people who pay the most attention to the natural instincts of the preservation of the species.

## XXIX

### MODERN HISTORY OF STRIKES

"SUCH is the perversity of man that his desires are insatiable. At first he is content with two oboli: as soon as he has got them, he wants constant and illimitable increases. By his nature his covetousness has no bounds, and yet the existence of most men is passed in procuring the means of satisfying it."

These words from Aristotle in the second book of his *Politics*, he has left to us from a time in which the ruin of the Greek democracies, conquered by the Macedonian Empire, allowed the tutor of Alexander to study retrospectively the institutions of his race. "As soon as citizens obtain civil and political liberty, they set to work to obtain an equality of riches." This observation of the Stagyræite is realising itself again in our own time.

If the industrialism of the ruling classes, if the madness of acquisition, invading all classes and creating what is already called "capitalism," and consists in the generalisation of the old rules of

speculation and the exclusive arts of trade and merchandise ; if Stock-Exchange enterprise and gambling now rule the economic world, confirming the above words of Aristotle, the working classes, who in his time were slaves, come upon the stage after they have been liberated, forming with their strikes the chorus of the great tragedy of "Money" in this last quarter of the nineteenth century.

The social war, of which we have seen sometimes skirmishes and one only battle—the Commune of Paris in 1871—will be the sombre depth of the life of the century into which we are shortly to enter.

And this striving for equality, that Aristotle considers an indispensable consequence of political liberty, must perforce be necessarily predominant in that nation in which such a doctrine has been traditional ; where the right of voting and representatives first established themselves in modern times, to be carried thence into the Continent of Europe. There have always and everywhere been conflicts between masters and workmen ; ancient and modern history are full of insurrections, uprisings, tumults of poor people and slaves ; but this order of conscientious revindication by legal and constitutional means, declaring war against capital by suspending work, fighting by means of the voluntary sacrifice of bread day by day, leaguings together, creating funds for resistance and for succour at the critical moment ; all this

appeared for the first time in our century in England.

Another reason, too, has been working in the same direction, namely, that the heaps of coal and iron in Great Britain gave the industrial primacy to this people in whose bosom arose Stephenson and Arkwright. They had the treasures of the raw material of industry, and had the genius of mechanical invention. They, foremost among all, were destined to exercise the empire of the great manufacturing industry.

For these reasons, then, the strikes are a collective invention of the British manufacturing workman of our century; they arise with the development of British industry assisted by the discovery of the steam-engine; and no wonder, rather the reverse, that they break out in presence of the competition that the human arm encounters in the brutally crushing action of the various machines for manufacturing purposes, arms of steel in which steam takes the place of blood, arms you cannot tire, arms that are as many as those of Briareus, causing men to be at once reduced to the chances of immediate emigration or death from hunger.

The strike of the Lancashire cotton-spinners and weavers in 1810 was the first attempt, which soon, in 1812, was followed by the strike at Nottingham, in which the workmen destroyed the spinning and weaving machines. Then came in 1815 the sad strike of the weavers in Manchester

and all the Midland counties of England, where there were meetings of a hundred thousand men, and a fight with the police resulting in the death of five hundred persons. It was the first bloody battle: other classes of workmen followed the example. In 1820 it was the woollen weavers, and in 1822 the carpenters. In 1825 the shipwrights came on the scene on the Thames; and the same contest repeated itself in 1839 on the Clyde. In 1834 the cotton-printers ruined the manufacturers, and precipitated two thousand families into want. Then began the coal-pit strike in 1831, in 1844 the Durham pit-men, and in 1849 those at Marley Hill. The Manchester engineers rose in 1837 and 1851; and the cotton operatives after the sanguinary catastrophe of 1815 again went out on strike in 1829, 1830, and 1836 at Preston, and in 1829 in Manchester.

The war had assumed another character by the middle of the century. Beginning in opposition to mechanical substitutes for labour the workmen thought at that time that the lottery of events had condemned them to the state of slaves to these iron substitutes that multiplied and cheapened production enormously. But they cheapened it and opened the markets of the whole world. The consumption seemed endless, so that then there would seem to be no want of work. And this ulterior change experienced by industry turned the greed of the workman to better fruit. The

manufacturer, instead of emancipating himself, placed himself still more in dependence on the worker.

The interruption of a workshop where everything is carried on by manual labour is not generally ruinous; if work stops expenses also stop. But in a shop fitted up with machinery, where the capital lying idle is enormous, the interest is crushing when it is not causing work to be carried on. Machinery always has to be fed; it represents so much money that wants its wages. Again, the vastness and complexity of the commercial operations of an industry for exportation enlarged to meet the demands of the whole world were a fresh cause of enormous losses whenever work was stopped. Next the workman perceived that he had got into the condition of fuel indispensable to a great engine; and he guessed that by merely abstaining he could threaten with death manufacture in its entirety; he saw that the manufacturer was at his mercy, and that the right time had come for exacting better conditions of life.

To obtain them, however, it was necessary to combine; because whenever the masters could go into the market and get substitutes for the refractory ones, mere individual risings would be barren of result, and bring the worst consequences on the heads of their originators. So with the practical instinct peculiar to the Saxon race, the English workman soon found the means adapted

to his designs by forming *trades unions*, corporate associations that promoted union among all workers of the same craft, warding off the dangers of competition in the hours of toil, at the same time that it created a fund to subsidise war and set itself against rash movements. From that time forward strikes became an organic thing in English working life, and lost the historic character of an uprising rashly hastened on by passion or despair.

Just about that time, midway in the century, Great Britain inaugurated the first Universal Exhibition in 1851, and declared the character, although even then pretty universally known, of her industrial acquirements, and the new era she was opening for manufacturing industry.

No great perspicuity is necessary in order to see how, now that industry is so international in its character, and competition is open to all the world, the same ideas that invented trades unions must also spread so as to embrace all European workmen in a brotherhood of toil. This seed, however, will not grow above the ground just yet.

Do not imagine, though, that the Continent knew no strikes before 1851; quite the contrary. Statistics show that from 1830 to 1860 there were in Belgium 1611 workmen prosecuted on charges of conspiracy, whereof 1090 were condemned to fine or imprisonment, and 521 were acquitted. In France in 1831 there was the terrible strike at Lyons that furnished the motto for the fearful

insurrection of June 1848 in Paris, "vivre en travaillant ou mourir en combattant." The year 1833 was full of strikes; in 1845 there were those of the carpenters of Paris, and two years before there was one of miners at Rive de Gier.

But the subordinate character of the Continental manufacturing industry, the lower education of the working classes, and the mixture of political ideas of the Utopian tradition of the socialism of Fourier or Saint-Simon, all these were reasons why the English should be at the head of the movement, although they were confined within the coasts of Great Britain. The idea of giving an international character to trades unions, so as to impart a cosmopolitan design to any industrial movement, was first put into shape at the banquet at St. Martin's Hall in 1864, a few months after the passing in France of the laws of constitutions that gave a legal character to strikes. This new right of workmen to resist collectively, initiated by Great Britain, was now adopted on the Continent, and was admitted explicitly or tacitly into all countries, so as to allow combinations of workmen to deliberate and suspend work in common, with the object of obliging employers to grant better terms.

If, as Max Wirth says, the theory be true that wages should rise and fall with the prices of produce, it is a matter of fact that the market for labour does not correspond with the fluctuations



in what it produces. During the very frequent periods of fluctuation the masters, however sharp they may be at reducing wages, are naturally more forgetful in increasing them. And particularly in countries in which the price of the circulating medium where paper money reigns keeps changing, and where prices oscillate violently, the disadvantages for the operative are considerable.

The constitutional charter for strikes in the industrial laws of our century is formulated in the words of the learned German inquirer into the Labour Acts of the nineteenth century. But the truth is that, if the first creative idea of trades unions rose no higher than an endeavour to keep up a standard of wages, the result has been in the second half of the century to internationalise industrial competition, to put an end to repeated strikes, to reform the legislations of States, to bring the Republic of 1848 to a crisis, to give a socialistic character to the second French Empire, to set the systematic German to work, and altogether to present the labour movement with an ampler programme in scenes and in actors.

In the interval between the London Exhibition of 1851 and the banquet of St. Martin's Hall in 1864, strikes both in Britain and on the Continent assumed a general character, happened more than once, and distinguished themselves by coming out victorious.

In Belgium there were in these thirteen years

446 cases of strikes before the courts of law. In Britain, besides the strikes of the building trades in 1859 and 1861, there were very pronounced ones in mines and metal working: in 1853 it was the Leeds and Durham colliers; in 1858 the Yorkshiremen with 10,000 out on strike; in 1862 it was the foundrymen at Chatham and at Leeds; and in 1863 and 1864 there was a general strike of coal-miners all through the United Kingdom. As may be seen, then, England was already at the head of a movement which, with some additional characteristics, was extending itself to other countries.

The organisation of the International, the publication of the gospel of the workman, *Das Kapital*, by Karl Marx, and the adhesion of the French operatives and Radicals to the new sect, are the principal facts in the new phase of the movement. At the same time that a universal trades union was founded, obliging all nations to enter upon common obligations, appeared the book destined to furnish the economic theory and history of this revolution, which arose in England spontaneously of its own accord after the application of machinery to industry.

• Karl Marx has raised himself head and shoulders above the rest as a sort of pope of the poor. A powerful writer, endowed with the most ample knowledge, and an extraordinary power of generalising what he knows, he has written a book

heralding a new era to the poor. His teaching, now well known, may be summed up as follows:— Given the money value of merchandise, it is seen that the workman gets a small portion as his wages. Why? Because the capitalist has in his keeping the machinery and instruments of labour, without which production is impossible, and the withholder of this monopoly, as it were, takes a portion of the whole value which should legitimately belong to the workman, who is the sole producer.

The substance of capital, moreover, is not destroyed, a mistake maintained by the errors and blindness of history, and absurd by the side of critical economy. Hence perhaps the sanction for the social war. Strikes, established and rendered passive by the establishment of a general union of workpeople, will go on clipping and reducing till they have clipped away entirely that which may be called the tax levied by capital on production, and till they give the entire product to labour. Buildings, machinery, and tools, instead of being private property, will have to pass into a common ownership, towards which and with which workpeople will direct their efforts.

This doctrine is called *Collectivism*, and is a sort of rejuvenescence of what used to be called Communism. Transplanted on to the Continent, the labour war soon acquired a general and ideal character incomprehensible in Britain. The

German gave his contribution to it, as a revindication of old times, and applied it to the whole world; and Marx came with his mathematical and abstract mind, dry and matter-of-fact, to succeed the poetical prophecies of the sanguine optimism of Lassalle, who appeared to many as the Messiah of the new religion. Marx was its St. Augustine, the pillar of its doctrine.

Up to that time Germany did not count for much in the world, just as a few years afterwards it got to count. There was at the time we speak of no empire or even great nation, ready and willing to compete with Britain and France in the industrial market. France was still foremost in Europe, the Empire holding the sceptre of international policy, though perhaps beginning to feel some difficulty in the position. Paris was still the capital of European policy, and France, thanks to imperial rule, made herself a serious competitor with British manufacture. It was necessary, therefore, that the new doctrine should make itself thoroughly well appreciated in Paris, if it wanted to conquer the world. The old dreams of Fourier and Saint-Simon, who addled French brains in the first half of the century, had broken up altogether, not so much under the muskets of 1848 as under that invincible critic and puller-down, Proudhon; yet there were here and there a few, brought up with a talent for conspiracy, who still held to the fragments of the illusions that had gone to pieces;

and from the criticisms of Proudhon, in so many ways like the new gospel of Marx, there arose fresh disciples and enthusiasts in successive layers of theory. There was, too, in France that which has been from all time a characteristic of the Gaul, a childish spirit of opposition, intensified by the victories of Republican Liberalism over the Empire and the instinct of political and revolutionary cabal.

The result of all this was that the International, the child of British trades unions, drilled and disciplined theoretically and practically by German method, became in Paris a revolutionary society. In face of this new gospel it became necessary to abolish the Empire and to create a new France and a new Europe; in fact to create a new world all over again upon the smoking ruins of the rotten old one. When once fairly roused, French imagination took the bit between its teeth.

By the side of the International, which was a society more or less legal, there was a secret one in which the initiated learnt the whole of the real object of a doctrine, and the complete design of the edifice of which the rules of the International were merely the scaffolding. In this society, the *Alliance*, were united the flower of French Jacobinism, the people who had been passed through the mill of previous revolutions, and the illustrious among the few anarchists. The missionaries scattered themselves all over Europe, secretly

announcing the glad tidings. There was no capital city without federations of the International, by whose side sat invisible sections of the Alliance of the initiated. It held them even as far away as Lisbon. After the now historic banquet at St. Martin's Hall, there were the Congresses of Geneva in 1864 and 1866, of Lausanne in 1867, and of Brussels in 1867, proclaiming everywhere and openly the doctrine of Collectivism, that is, the necessity for getting rid of the present possessors of factories and of all machinery and plant, which should become common property; as well as the transfer to the State of all mines, quarries, railways, forests, and farm-lands. The Franco-German war came about, and the result of the new character taken by the social war was the tragic conflict with the Paris Commune in 1871, in which everything finished in fire and blood: but subsequent history took a more peaceful line.

And now that we have gone aside out of the road and strayed so far among the briars and bushes, we must struggle along the path till we come out before we can go back on to the high road to England.

## XXX

### CONTINUATION

AFTER the catastrophe in Paris, which was for the Collectivism of Marx what the days of June 1848 were for the doctrines of Saint-Simon, there came on the scene some entirely new pieces. The social democracy, instead of coming victorious out of the battle, endured the hardest blows. In France the Republic was installed, but by the side of it in Germany there arose a formidable empire, the arbiter of the destinies of Europe. The deposition of Paris as the centre of politics, and by the treaty of Frankfort the subordination of France in industrial matters, were the consequences of the great war, and the empire erected in Germany and solidified by Prussia constituted itself a powerful industrial machine, having in front of it not only an Emperor who inherited the autocratic traditions of the ways of Prussia, but also a Chancellor who was a disciple of Lassalle, and proposed to cope with the question of poverty for the protection of the State and under the sanction of authority.

Internationalism, as it was understood before 1871, that is, the republic of toil, having Paris for its capital, and a revolutionary democracy with French notions for its ideal, passed away into history, though I do not mean to say that when the International was dismembered and the secret societies prosecuted, the hopes of Collectivism had vanished from the minds of the poor. The societies came to an end, but their doctrine did not. The action of repressive laws, the benefit of protective ones, the preaching of State and Christian socialism, none of these things sufficed in Germany to hinder the appearance of episodes of industrial war, or the growing importance of social democracy. The strike at Margarethe in Westphalia was the beginning of an already long history for France, Great Britain, and Belgium. In 1882 the coal-miners of Dux and Brux in Bohemia struck, with serious encounters with the military. In 1885 the stonemasons in Berlin struck, and there were strikes at Brünn. In Westphalia, a mining and metal-working district, one may say that there was a strike every year, and that order was due to the rifles of the military, as it was at the well-known settlement of disputes at Warsaw.

In England the series of strikes never comes to an end; but with the good sense of the English the trades unions do not allow themselves to be lulled into the sleepy dreams of the International. They continue to exercise their regular and normal



functions, taking the side of the workman wherever there is a dispute.

Continuing the history interrupted in the year of the banquet at St. Martin's Hall, we find the coal and iron miners striking in 1865, and the coal-miners at it again in 1867 in Yorkshire; and in 1868, 1871, 1875, 1877, and even after that, all over Wales. The dockers rose in 1867 on the Clyde, in 1872 in London, and at different times elsewhere, up to the serious strike two years ago, which was appeased by the intervention of Cardinal Manning. The glass-workers struck in 1868, and the London builders in 1872 and 1877. The cotton-spinners and weavers, the class among whom commenced in 1810 the movement of the workman asserting himself, rose in Belfast to the number of 40,000 in 1874, in order to declare, four years later, a monster strike that included the whole of Lancashire as well.

The *Economist*, in recounting the number of strikes in Great Britain, puts them down as 191 in 1877, 267 in 1878, and 327 in 1879, principally in the mining, metal, building, and textile industries. The movement grew. And if at the present time such enormous strikes arise of an almost tragic character, it is because to these great conflicts there are superadded the power and the education of the workmen and the intervention of the Government, which nowhere is more real, more practical, and more efficacious than in Great Britain.

Nowhere, also, does the Central Government count for less than in the United States; and in proportion as the American Republic approximated to the condition of things existing in Europe in industrial progress and in density of population, there were necessarily repeated on the other side the Atlantic the phenomena that arose on this. They repeated themselves and they still repeat themselves, but with an extravagantly original character, the outcome both of the want of unity among the people, the liberty existing for producing originalities, of the absence of tradition, and of the touch of madness that lurks behind the practical genius in every Anglo-Saxon brain. In 1869 one Stevens, a journeyman tailor, conceived the idea of founding the "Knights of Labour," a society composed of three-fourths workmen and one-fourth middle-class people, to the exclusion of medical men, lawyers, Stock-Exchange speculators, and keepers of drink-shops. The object consisted in the defence of the interests of labour by association, like trades unions in general, and especially in the equalisation of men and women's wages. The means consisted in strikes as the practical, and in the exercise of their voting powers as the theoretical. In a few months the society counted several millions, without distinction of race or sex.

In 1876-77 appeared in the United States the great railway strike that extended from shore to

shore, from New York to San Francisco ; in 1883 the telegraphists struck ; in 1886 the tramway people of New York, and afterwards the railway servants. The Knights of Labour thus shook society by attacking it forcibly at the same time that they stirred up strikes in the mines of coal and metals. In 1880 it was the mines of Pennsylvania ; in 1882 those of Maryland ; in 1884 the smelting furnaces in Massachusetts ; in 1885 the coal-mines of Pittsburg and the forges of Ohio and Pennsylvania.

In Belgium the year 1867 saw the terrible strike of Marchienne-le-Pont ; 1869, that at Cockerill's works at Seraing, when the workmen stoned the troops at night, and, after rifle-volleys, the cavalry fell upon the mob sword in hand, and the infantry cleared the streets with fixed bayonets, leaving heaps of dead. It was at the time of the hopes of miraculous redemption through the International, the forerunner of the Commune of Paris and the echo of the strike at Roubaix, which is written in history. Afterwards, in 1876, came the strike at Charleroi as a wave of the earthquake of 1875 in Wales. In 1884 the glass-workers of Charleroi came upon the scene.

Let us cross the frontier and come into France, where the strikes at Roubaix in 1867, at Ricamaric in 1869, and lastly at Crenzot in 1870, on the eve of the war, precipitated the movement, adulterated with political intrigues and inflamed by

revolutionary agitators. At Roubaix the manufacturers had introduced improved looms that economised hand labour. One workman could serve two looms instead of one. Hence there were demands for increased wages on account of the economy. As soon as this was refused the factories were given up to riot. There were more than 25,000 workpeople out on strike. The authorities asked for reinforcements of troops from Lille, but before the troops arrived there were hours of unrestrained tumult. The people broke into the factories, broke the new looms in pieces, sacked and burnt the houses of two manufacturers, and gave vent to the suppressed hatred of many years, as in the servile wars, or in the Middle Age *jacqueries*.

After the tragedy of 1871 there were no more strikes in France for five years; but afterwards, in 1876, the carpenters rose, and the Paris cabinet-makers in 1880 and 1882. In 1878 there were monster strikes at Decazeville and Anzin, repeated in 1884 and 1886, and at Commentry in 1881. These were the events in mining and metallurgy, and in the textile industries in 1879 the *canuts* of Lyons struck, and in 1882 the weavers of Roanne and Bessèges.

The *Statistique générale de la France* acknowledges in the following numbers the extension, duration, and numerical importance of French strikes in the last few years—

Year.	Number of Strikes.				Number of Strikers.
1882	...	...	182	...	42,156
1883	...	...	144	...	32,908
1884	...	...	90	...	23,702
1885	...	...	108	...	16,671
1886	...	...	161	...	19,556
1887	...	...	108	...	10,117

The number of days' work lost in 1887 is calculated at 87,803, and in 1886 at 445,974. The strike at Decazeville in 1886, defiled by the assassination of M. Watrin, engineer, alone accounted for 240,000 days. The two most important strikes in 1866, next to that of Decazeville, were that of the weavers of Amplepuis with a loss of 45,600 days, and of Saint-Quintin with 18,122. The largest in 1887 were those of the spinners of Roubaix, of the weavers of Armentières, and of the millers of Revia and Laison in the Ardennes.

In France, as in Great Britain and everywhere else, the frequency and magnitude of strikes is diminishing. Why? •

This is what we shall study a little further on.

## XXXI

### ECONOMY OF THE OPERATIVE—ACTUAL SOCIALISM

WE have enumerated the battles and counted the losses. If any one set out to calculate the sum total of days' work lost by the workpeople in their successive campaigns in the social war, he would arrive at fabulous amounts, tending towards the conclusion that this process of strike is fundamentally ruinous, and finding an argument in the comparative peace of the last few years: it would be the consequences that have followed the disillusion of the working classes.

Now this is just what statistics refute in the following manner. In his *History of Prices*, the celebrated English statistician, Mulhall, presents the following table of the wages of different trades in Great Britain at the times stated, which embrace the period of the industrial war we have already looked at.

				Shillings per week.		
				(1780)	(1820)	(1880)
Smiths	...	...	...	17	24	32
Stonemasons	...	...	...	17	25	35
Carpenters	...	...	...	15	20	20
Tinmen	...	...	...	18	25	35
Spinners	...	...	...	12	16	24
Farm-labourers	...	...	...	8	12	20
Shepherds	...	...	...	6	8	15

It is obviously not enough to state the rises in wages, it is also necessary to take into consideration the proportions they bear to the prices of the principal necessities; and in face of this Mulhall calculates that a carpenter, for instance, could buy in

			(1780)	(1820)	(1880)
Meat (pounds)	...	...	10	10	16
Butter	„	...	5	5	8
Sugar	„	...	5	5	8
Bread	„	...	70	70	100
Coal (hundredweight)	...	...	2	2	2

and that these articles, relatively to the prices of them, represent in pence in

				(1780)	(1820)	(1880)
Meat	...	...	...	30	50	130
Butter	...	...	...	30	50	96
Sugar	...	...	...	22	24	22
Bread	...	...	...	80	100	100
Coal ...	...	...	...	18	16	12
				180	240	360

From which the inference is that the British workman could buy in 1880, with his week's wages, 44 per cent. more of the necessities of life than he could in the previous century. But on the other hand, as house rent tripled in the same period, the 44 must be reduced to 20.

This is the practical result of the British trades unions, it being the fact that in spite of the better terms obtained by the working classes, and in spite of the strikes that constitute the costs of the war,

British industry, notwithstanding the growing competition of continental nations and the wide extent of protection, has not failed to progress. This is the known proof of the fact that strikes of workmen have been successful in equalising the terms of labour and capital in Great Britain without prejudice to economy of production.

Mulhall says that wages of every kind went up about 40 per cent. between 1850 and 1880, as an average, over the civilised world. Some, he adds, attribute the increase to the consequence of the discoveries of gold in California and Australia, others to the spread of general education, and others to industrial expansion and the greater amount of work that can be performed. It, however, appears more probable to me that it is the consequence of railways, by facilitating emigration, and permitting those who wanted better wages to go where they were to be found. There can be no doubt that emigration was a necessary factor in the calculation, but it is obvious that if the endeavours of the working classes to obtain better wages can be satisfied by emigration, the masters have hastened to satisfy their demands, to prevent their own ruin, before the emigration has taken place. As to ourselves, it is evident that the increase of the nett balance in wages in Europe and the United States proceeds most decidedly from the movement of the resistance of the classes in question, which has been formally denounced in



this century ; which does not by any means intend to convey the inference either that the workman is able arbitrarily to alter the inevitable condition of the labour market, or that emigration and other ascertained causes may be without their value in contributing to the results stated.

The rise of wages in Great Britain and France between 1840 and 1880 is expressed in the following figures—

#### GREAT BRITAIN.

				Pence per day.		
				(1840)	(1860)	(1880)
Smiths	...	...	...	42	56	64
Stonemasons	...	...	...	46	60	70
Carpenters	...	...	...	40	50	60
Tinmen	...	...	...	44	60	70
Spinners	...	...	...	36	40	48

#### FRANCE.

				Pence per day.	
				(1840)	(1880)
Smiths	...	...	...	25	35
Stonemasons	...	...	...	22	35
Carpenters	...	...	...	22	35
Tinmen	...	...	...	22	33
Spinners	...	...	...	24	36

The average rise from 1840 is in these five trades respectively 45, 55, 55, 55, and 42 per cent., a rise all the more important since the prices of necessities, except those of meat, butter, and wine, went down. This explains the enormous increase of business all over Europe, since the phenomena studied in Great Britain and France have been general over the Continent.

According to the *Census Reports* of the United States, the average wages since 1850 have increased in the following scale, when reduced to British money—

				Pounds (per year)	Pence (per day)
1850	...	...	..	51	40
1860	...	...	..	61	48
1870	...	...	..	69	53
1880	...	...	..	73	57

The increase is also 44 per cent., as in Europe: the Knights of Labour obtained results identical with those got by trades unions. Nevertheless, work is more remunerative in the United States, because the balance of wages left is greater there, as is seen by the following table—

				Shillings per week.		
				Wages.	Food.	Balance left.
Great Britain	...	...	...	31	14	17
France	...	...	...	21	12	9
Germany	...	...	...	16	10	6
Belgium	...	...	...	20	12	8
Italy	...	...	...	15	9	6
Spain	...	...	...	16	10	6
Europe, average	...	...	...	20	11	9
United States	...	...	...	48	16	32
Australia	...	...	...	40	12	28

Mulhall says that the condition of the workpeople can alone be considered satisfactory when a day's wages represents more than two days' cost of food; and this is what is found in England, where the balance represents 55 and food 45 out of a total of 100; and in Australia and the United

States, where the balance rises respectively to 70 and 67.

As a matter of fact, the author to whom we have referred says in conclusion, that so far from the masters defrauding the workmen it is evident that, normally in Great Britain, and one may say in Europe in general, the share of the capitalist is reduced to the minimum, below which the return would not make it worth while to invest capital in industrial undertakings.

In France, Germany, and other countries in which capital brings more interest than in Great Britain, it is clear that the share of the capitalist must be greater, and therefore that of the workman less, for the same price of the sale of the product. And if this fixed quantity be altered on account of having to pay duty, the price being artificially raised, the increased dearness of living reduces the nett balance, even if the rate of daily wages be raised.

Moreover, to bring to an end the many figures I have quoted, we must agree as to the efficacy and sureness of the means employed by the working classes to insure getting their due share of the prices of manufactured articles. The strikes of this century have actually resulted in increasing wages about one-half more than they were; reducing, so to speak, the profit on manufacturing industry to the level of the price of money, or interest.

If the increase of wages is not equal to the balance left after necessities have been bought, this does not come from the dearness of the latter, but from the exorbitant price of dwelling-houses in towns. The construction of workmen's quarters, and still more the decentralisation of factories in the direction of the country, would be the natural and necessary corrective.

However, if the efficacy of workmen's buildings be taken for granted, the figures themselves show us the reason why strikes do not now take the serious form or the size and frequency that they did thirty years ago. It is because they have cured many faults, and made the relations of capital and labour come to something like a natural proportion, teaching all those interested in the conflict, whether masters or men, how to avoid abusing, the former the power money gave them, and the latter the power they have acquired by force.

Under the shadow of the laws that allowed unions of workmen, there expanded in a more or less disorderly way associations for the purpose of resistance, and places of resort promoted or patronised by them.

The imagination rose, and its ideal got exaggerated: out of a merely practical question there grew a programme of social regeneration; the plan of campaign was generalised even as far as the immediate suppression of industrial capital in favour of Collectivist expropriation; and the field of action

was enlarged as far as the dream of a cosmopolitan operative scheme by uniting people of all countries in the bonds of the International. This scheme came to pieces in a tempest of fire and blood, of devastation and death.

The peace of the next few years after 1871, a peace resulting from disorder and fatigue, succeeded the former state of ideal intoxication. The working classes, each in his own country, were associated to protect their own interests in a manner within the bounds of possibility. But the war of 1870 resulted in Germany entering the mercantile world with the power of a great empire, and the political hegemony exercised by her in Europe for twenty years at least, put into the mind of the Emperor the possibility of exercising it in the industrial economy of the world, in order to thus satisfy the mysterious longings of his nature, the traditions of his dynasty, and at the same time the difficulties raised before him by the poverty of numerous classes injured by the dearness of the produce bought abroad in British, French, and Belgian markets.

That was the meaning of the so much talked of Conference at Berlin in 1890. If it had not been limited to the platonic expression of the good wishes of an innocent love for mankind, and if it had risen to the hopes of its designers, it would have been another edition of the International, but one contracted not by anarchist democracy, but by

German official socialism. The industrial economy of Europe would have become subject, in so far as labour is concerned, to international agreements; and the mandates of those treaties that were already sought to be put in force to the extent of fixing the day's work universally at eight hours, would necessarily mark the point of departure for still more important measures.

If from this point of view the Berlin Conference entirely miscarried, it is nevertheless impossible to contest its success as a measure of the current modes of thought. The social war, the appearance of the "Fourth Estate," socialism, and all the rest of it that has for not much less than thirty years constituted a real fear, passed in 1890 into a condition of current events to be discussed in international assemblies attended, if not patronised, by Governments that unanimously recognised in Berlin, by the mere fact of sending their delegates there, how much the question of the poorer classes was worthy of careful study. And particularly with regard to the phenomenon of strikes it is convenient to note how everywhere there are extending Boards of Conciliation, mixed juries composed of masters and workmen, for the purpose of settling quarrels and avoiding conflicts. They are justices *of the peace*, or *conciliators*, an institution that arose in Portugal in 1519 in the time of King Dom Manuel, and in France with the Revolution. They are also arbitrators in cases where people cannot agree; and in

through the consequently indispensable intervention of mercantile speculation in a trading community; through the energy of the national genius in civilised countries setting itself against making labour a cosmopolitan affair; and through the unpreparedness of the agricultural labourers to co-operate with the industrial.

However, contending for shorter hours of work and increased wages, against machinery that competes with them, against oppressive penalties, and against deceptive protective institutions (co-operative stores, building societies, etc.), under pretence of which capital made money when it got the chance; trying, in fine, to raise the moral and intellectual level, and as much as possible the wages of work, by means of conflict when conflict is necessary; this is the fruitful and victorious mission of the movement the study of which we have pursued as a consequence of having taken up that of trades unions in Great Britain.

But above everything else, to put all into one, as it were, is the increase of wages, because most assertions of rights resolve themselves into this; and increase of wages is limited by the conditions of the market for produce. Directly the capital invested in industry does not produce a profit equal to the current rate of interest on money, industry languishes, trade disappears, and workmen are obliged to emigrate. They cannot ever succeed in doing away with capital: they only

make it flow in some other direction that hinders work. A strike is a sword with two edges : if it is badly handled, it is liable to kill the holder.

The growing capacity of the working classes, a result of democratic life and of the social war itself, their having managed to get as wages a relatively larger share of the profit of what they make ; the still sustained ideal of a Collectivist society, and being so armed as to take advantage of each move ; all this causes those nations that live principally by exporting their manufactures to suffer a social and economic discomfort only cured by the remedy of emigration. This is what has long happened in Great Britain, and is now largely influencing Germany. It is to this especially that must be attributed the revolution in ideas as to foreign trade, the preference for protectionist doctrines being now found everywhere. To protect the home market for home produce rightly seems of the first consequence to statisticians, because in the home market it is easier to alter the prices of products and mitigate the ambition of work-people without annihilating industries that cannot help to sustain the contest because they are subject to the competition of foreign prices.

So, from the movement begun in our century, and which undoubtedly will be more marked in the next, there must result, so far as we are concerned, the general nationalisation of industries, each country consuming its own produce and



exchanging what is left. Instances like that of Great Britain, an immense factory that provides the world with manufactures, and receives back from it food and raw material, are evidently facts opposed to social and economic nature, let them take whatever derivation they may from the conditions of mineral nature.

On the other hand, nationalising industries, and at the same time bettering the education of the working classes and increasing industrial and commercial civilisation under the capitalist rule we are living under, will cause a day to come, it is easy to foresee, in which, what with credit and co-operation, the workers will dispense with interest-earning capital, that is to say, with the individual possession of it.

In one word, with the view that the entire product of work should belong to the working classes, they, from the nature of their moral and intellectual training, must necessarily take different lines from that of considering capital as indispensable to industry. If not, all revolutions are meaningless ; but after this view is well established, resistance to it will be in vain.

## XXXII

### VISIT TO WHITECHAPEL

THE great enemy of the decisive victory of the poor in Great Britain will be in the vice inherent in the fundamental quality of the race—animal energy. The vice is intemperance.

It is the vice of all classes—not of the poor only. It is accentuated by misery, it is true, but it also flourishes in the bosom of opulence. It takes violent hold of the low and brutal at the same time that it seduces the polished and civilised. All classes suffer from it because all possess that same quality of exuberance of temperament. "The ladies," Dr. D—— said to me, "instead of alcohol, take chloral and eau-de-cologne. It is only by these means that they are able to endure the fatigue of society life in the *season*, and the taste once acquired they ultimately get to inhale nitrite of amyl and chloroform. They also use ether; but—I don't know why—it is in the poorer classes that intemperance has taken a commoner form. In the North of Ireland they get their native whisky. All classes drink too much: it is our national vice."

"Perhaps the climate has much to do with it."

"Certainly; undoubtedly. There are those who get twenty shillings a week and spend ten of them in the public-house. There are thirty thousand persons locked up every year in London for drunkenness, and two-thirds of them are quarrelsome in their cups, and are apprehended while creating disturbances. There is an enormous total of cut faces and knocked-out eyes, and there are almost as many women as men."

"But the temperance societies, and the preaching of teetotallers?"

"Traditions, my dear sir! Nothing of this sort corrects constitutional vice! They drink tea, because it affords them some gratification, and when they have not got money to spend in the gin-palace. Do you want a proof?—it lies in the value of alcoholic drinks consumed annually by each inhabitant of the United Kingdom. We are strong in statistics."

"Certainly you are."

"Weil, then, this consumption per head of the population, of wine, spirits, and beer (wine and cider count for a tenth, spirits for a quarter, and beer for a half) has been constantly increasing. In 1820 it was £2 8s. 6d.; in 1840 and 1860 £2 18s. 6d.; and in 1880 £3 10s. 11d. What proof is more eloquent than this? There is none."

We continued the conversation during the gradual digestion of dinner, in a desultory way,

because it was yet early for the hour fixed on by the detective who was to take us that evening to the miserable caverns of the East End. We met him at ten o'clock and proceeded.

Less than a mile beyond the open space where at the crossing of several streets the edifice forming the Bank of England stands like a fort, there branches the great artery to the east part of the town. From the Bank the road is called "Cornhill," and then "Leadenhall Street," where the roads branch again; one of them forms a direct continuation with the east under the names of "Whitechapel Road" and "Mile End Road," while the other branch inclines towards the Thames under the name of the "Commercial Road." Each of these thoroughfares to the end of their branches must be about three miles long, counting up to the part where the second terminates. At this point there are two more branch roads, one towards the East India Docks and the other towards the West India.

Just in this quarter the bank of the Thames is portioned out into docks and business warehouses; we had already left the London Docks behind us.

But to conclude the topographical description. From the point at which the Commercial Road ends the Burdett Road goes due north, and falls at right angles into the Mile End Road. So that these three roads, or thoroughfares of the *East End*, enclose a triangular space with the vertex

turned towards the City, and having the base, in the Burdett Road, of rather less than a mile long, while the sides, about three miles long, are marked out, one by the Commercial Road, and the other by the Mile End and Whitechapel Roads.\* This triangular space was the field selected for our nocturnal operations. It is one of the fearfully miserable caverns of London, a dirty labyrinth of lanes and yards, recesses into which light never enters, castaway ruins, dens of people well-nigh savages.

The detective that accompanied us was a broad-shouldered giant. He infused into us a confidence we were very glad of in the middle of the quarter renowned for the exploits of Jack the Ripper. To one observation I made to him the detective answered me gravely:—"Certainly. It would be rash to come alone to these places even by day. By night, even inhabitants of London do not venture—much less strangers! This is no longer London. London ends with the *City*. This is the *East End*. The greater part of these people do not know of the existence of Hyde Park. They are born and they die here."

We went on following the detective. Along the wide modern thoroughfares that form the boundaries of the quarter, planted with trees like the boulevards of Paris, the tramways worked; and the liberally illuminated shop-fronts lit up the people in the street. It was a mild and quiet night in June. There was a public-house every

few doors, and the gas lit up with a garish light the rows of bottles, shining on the polished bronze work of the shelves. Against the large plate-glass windows there were placed faces with the greedy stare of the ecstasy of hunger and vice.

I think I have already stated in this book that the population of *Inner London* was 4,309,000 in 1890, and that thirty per cent., about a third part, are miserable, in the following classification—

Criminal, or partly so	...	...	...	37,545
Very poor	...	...	...	316,838
Poor, with irregular or insufficient wages	...	...	...	938,050

On the top of this stratum of misery is a working population of 2,167,126; and on the top of three-and-a-half millions of workers and unfortunates there are 849,441 persons who possess something of their own. A social constitution that gives as its result a distribution of wealth such as this is the foundation of all I have already described. And this cancer of London misery, this British *wen*, or *swelling*, is frightfully extensive, as though it were a general disease in British economy.

The statistics of public relief in England and Wales show the existence of nearly a million receiving relief. Nevertheless it is right to mention that since 1870 things have got much better; the percentage of poor having gone down in a greater proportion than that of 4 to 3. But the

still worse case than the misery of the miserable is the idea that the rich form of poverty. They succour it without human charity; they fight against it just as one tries to stamp out an epidemic. For them the poor are lepers. When a gentleman deals with his like, he always supposes that he is dealing with a person disposing of the means of profuse expenditure of money. To consider any one as poor is an offence. With the idea they have formed of life the poor are in effect prisoners of war: *vae victis, beati possidentes*.

The detective turned and took us towards a street as dark as pitch. Along the sides there passed the shadows of queer-looking men talking to themselves. We went in file. The detective kept his policeman's whistle in his hand. We arrived at a square where the houses, miserable little cottages, standing back, formed a dismal recess. On the ground there were heaps of rotten mud. On one side lay the wreck of a cart with a broken axle. Absolute solitude. "Here it was," said the detective to us, stopping and pointing to the corner, "here it was that Jack the Ripper operated upon his first victim."

We followed behind, and after making a turn the policeman, our guide, knocked at the door of a dirty cottage. A hoarse voice grunted out an answer from within. The door opened and we entered, going down from the level of the street, for the tenement was partly underground. It was an

enclosure that was at most double the size of the little iron bedstead placed on one side of it. A petroleum lamp, without screen, gave an uneasy light over the room, if such the place wherein we were could be called. On the bedstead, upon a straw mattress reeking with filthy moisture and covered with indescribable rags, lay a bald-headed man with a bottle of spirits. His breath, mingling with the smell of the petroleum and the ferment of the rottenness, formed an atmosphere impossible to breathe. A woman by his side said to the detective, "He has had no work at the docks for a fortnight."

I really do not know if the term woman could be applied to this creature, old before her time, her scanty hair plastered to her head, dragging over her bare shoulders a shawl yellow with grease, wearing a dirty petticoat, and trailing along on her feet a pair of loathsome slippers. She had the expression of an idiot.

"She drinks as well," said the policeman to us seriously.

You might have cut the air of the room with a knife. There were also a broken chair, some remnants of clothes hung up on a line, and in a corner, in the dark shade, something that appeared to me to stir. I went near and stooped down; it was a child entirely naked. I wished to amuse the little creature, but it bit me like an animal, with a savage air lighting up its eyes. The mother grunted, the



father breathed with difficulty, and the detective, as we went out, said to us—"It was on that bed that Jack the Ripper mutilated another woman. Did you not see on the wall at the side some dark splashes? It was the blood that gushed upon it, and it is there still."

## XXXIII

### POVERTY

WE had no intention to visit, one by one, the scenes of the assassinations of the ferocious Ripper, so we went on. At each step we met scantily-clad, dishevelled women going on the prowl along the streets.

"Here there exists prostitution of the worst kind," said the detective, recounting incidents that the pen cannot be used to produce.

We had got to the lowest abyss of degeneration of the human species. Between the two poles and from the east to the west, London includes both the zenith and the nadir of life ; but there is wanting the equator of rational instinct, æsthetic and considerate, that in other countries humanises society and obliterates striking contrasts. At this pole, intemperance and prostitution are sordid, while at the other they are gilded.

There is no more fleshly man than the Englishman ; on this account concupiscence is nowhere more organised than here. If it were not for the severity of the laws, sometimes almost grotesque,

all this would end in fearful orgy. One of the commonest forms of it lies in the attempts made usually in railway-carriages. No one gets into a compartment in which he sees a woman alone, because he runs the risk of appearing in a police-court, and paying some desolating penalty. They unblushingly invent the most shameless things. A friend of mine, forewarned, got out of a compartment on the underground railway, where he saw a blue-eyed maiden seraphically ensconced. He went into a smoking compartment, and she, noticing him, followed him. He mentioned to her that it was a smoking-compartment; she smiling civilly, answered, "I don't object." "No, but I do," said my friend, and got out.

But let us return to Whitechapel. The detective led us through some dark turnings. Swarms of children appeared at each corner, bunches of roses already faded, half-naked, dirty, with savage and brow-beaten expressions, as they appeared to us by the glaring light of the gin palaces, into one of which we were entering. Inside it appeared worse. The light of the gas was sullied with the heavy and suffocating air, and impregnated with alcoholic fumes, tobacco-smoke, and unsavoury, dirty people. In one corner, bending forwards, an old woman, with grisly hair hanging in strips, was smoking her clay pipe. It recalled to my mind an Esquimaux. Legs apart, hands in pockets, and with the grimaces of an ape, was

a white-haired man with a sharp nose and stupidly petulant expression.

From this place we went into one of the slums where there are threepenny and fourpenny lodging-houses.

"They make a good deal of money," said the policeman. "Good business."

Here the wandering population that inhabit the neighbourhood of the docks sleep at night. They sleep on the ground with their heads resting on a rope lying across the floor. There is a nauseous stuffiness of rotten old clothes in fermentation. Down below, as you came in, drinking was going on. You meet people of every kind and race. There is neither rich nor poor, neither Greek nor barbarian, before the law of labour. The docks are a Capernaum to which people come from all parts of the world. Old clothes that once were costly, overcoats, perhaps, from Poole or Hill, hats that once were mirrors, boots without heels, all this sort of thing could be seen by the side of the Chinaman's gown and the Moor's tunic, enclosing gallows-looking figures and fierce countenances set-off with the scarlet of alcohol. In these dark caverns the quivering rays of the gas jets forced their sinister way through the midst of the sad spectacle. We then crossed the Jewish quarter. It was the Sabbath evening. The houses were comparatively good, and through the windows you could see the tables spread for supper. We came

across business-signs and addresses written in Hebrew. Hither come crowds of Jews expelled from Russia; hence go emigrants scattering themselves over the world. According to what the detective told us, the population does not eye these intrusions with favour.

It was already quite dark; the shops were already shut along the spacious roads that enclose the labyrinth of misery; and the dark shadows thrown by the trees across the pavement, and the women wandering about more or less intoxicated, seemed spectres of the misery that inhabits the numerous slums of Whitechapel.

We were at the junction at the end of Commercial Road where begin to diverge the two ways to the East and West India Docks. Up from the Thames there came a damp mist. One felt that down there, in the forest of masts and yards, the monster now slept that in a few hours, when he awoke, would send forth the steam from the cylinders of steam-engines, would make the windlasses quiver, would gather his army of dock-labourer slaves, and would make the air resound with a nervous hum.

We went down a steep lane, and found ourselves in the Chinese quarter. London gained in my estimation the proportions of a world in itself. One saw advertisements of every kind in curious characters; and in the night-air, just beginning to be tinged with the early dawn, fantastic dragons

waved in the flags of the closed shops. In the street there was not a living soul, but on each side a little house shed forth a light. The detective knocked at the door of one of them ; it did not open, and voices that we could hear endeavoured to conceal themselves.

"They don't want to open. They are gambling. Come here : it is an opium tavern."

We knocked at the other, and went up after the policeman had shown his credentials. We ascended a dark staircase, steep and narrow, at the top of which we were met by Mrs. Johnson, an Englishwoman, and wife of Mr. Johnson, a Chinese with a pigtail, who kept and made the most of his opium house in Ratcliff Highway. His wife was a fervent member of a temperance society, which, however, by no means hindered her from earning her livelihood by keeping an opium tavern. "Make money, my son ; honestly if you can, but make it." One's first duty is to get a living.

When the door was opened for us to come into the opium room we did not notice anything particularly strange. There was an atmosphere of sweetly-bitter smoke. A few minutes later we took in the view better, and noticed on each side of the room a couch with greasy cushions upon which seven or eight persons, stretched at length, presented the successive stages of intoxication, from the stupefaction of the first moments to the almost

death which comes on them at last, white-like corpses, without motion, and bloodless at the lips. They who were still able to do so, quietly inhaled the smoke and puffed it out in thick volumes through their distended lips. Mrs. Johnson 'busied herself in renewing the pipes and filling them with the balls of opium of the consistency of glue. Each ball of opium only lasted not more than two minutes. The window was closed ; the heat was suffocating, the smoke was stifling, the smell nauseating, and the dirt repellent. I remember descending the stairs at a bound, and when I found myself in the street it seemed to me that I was safe.

Safe from what? From that hellish fright in which every vice had passed before my eyes in one desolating exhibition, and out of which I had been carried by the strong arm of an authority that had no feeling. All this is horrible ; but the truth is that it once was more so. Criminality has undergone a considerable reduction, though the poor-rates amount to as much as the annual estimates of Portugal. For information on this point one should read the work of Fowle, *The Poor Law*. The poor-rates amount to £8,000,000, and are equal to an annual tax of 10s. 9d. on each inhabitant of London and of 5s. 9d. for every Englishman, taking them altogether. With this money they assist about 100,000 persons a-day

in London, or about 800,000 in all England and Wales.

Many, however, who do not need it, eat out of the trough of the poor. The poor-law administration has an army of 4,030 medical men, 624 clerks, etc., 651 masters of work-houses, and 1,387 subordinates of all kinds; in total 6,692 persons, who cost £1,400,000. Add to this for general and administrative expenses, £1,100,000, and we have out of the £8,000,000 only £5,600,000 actually distributed in relief. The machinery of distribution costs more than thirty per cent., which is regrettable as a principle when we are speaking of charity. But charity is a mere word of which the mystic and abstract meaning is not accessible to senses that require highly-seasoned dishes and strong and heady drinks, and to a people always with their sleeves turned up ready for the boxing-match of existence, either for the combat or the prize. The poor are those conquered in the battle of life. They are helped as a utilitarian measure, through fear and out of motives of self-defence; kindness does not exist. The philanthropic sentiment, a very common passion, delights in objects more picturesque or romantic. Wilberforce set the fashion in negroes; and Mrs. Beecher Stowe, in *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, touched the hearts of two or three generations of young ladies, who cried over the lot of the slaves, and who themselves have



at their doors a gruesome legion of poor Londoners. So counterfeit, so eccentric, so much as if charity had caught a cold, is the manner in which they love their neighbour. Generally speaking, they prefer the brute-creation to them. Innumerable societies there are for the protection of animals, when all the while people are expiring from hunger, bursting with drink, or frozen with cold.

I was ruminating on these things, and as it was now dawn I was on my way to the embankment, towards my room at the Savoy, when an episode, otherwise common enough, delayed me longer. On a bench there was lying a woman who must at one time have been handsome. At her breast was a baby sleeping. By her side was an unfortunate man, and on the ground were squatted two little children. It was a happy family who had managed to pass the night on a bench; for others were under the arches of the bridges. And there are every night eight or ten thousand people in London without a bed to sleep in or a roof to shelter them; and there are every day as many more unfortunate people who have to sink down unnoticed into the gulf.

I stopped to contemplate this striking picture. It was at the mild dawn of a summer's day. What would it be when everything was freezing and stiffened with cold?

It was by this time broad daylight, and the

towers and pinnacles of Westminster showed themselves in Oriental fashion in the air. Were they mere dreams, or were they visions of my excited imagination? There appeared to me to rise over the horizon the image seen by Nebuchadnezzar, of which the Bible says that the feet were of potter's clay.

## XXXIV

### CRISIS OF CAPITALISM—INVENTIONS OF SPECULATION

INDEED this powerful capitalist society has its feet of clay—it is a colossal heap of riches propped up with crumbling and inconsistent misery.

Organised and equipped in order to get as much as possible of the world's wealth ; now that the nations have learnt the lesson she has taught, and the blockade planned by Napoleon at the beginning of the century has been set in motion everywhere, she begins to feel a grave uneasiness, her exportations of manufactured articles fall rapidly, freights fall, steamers are lying idle in her ports, and bankruptcies happen frequently. This crisis, moreover, is not the gravest. It suffices to restrain somewhat the rapidity of the risky overgrowth of industry and commerce, in order to re-establish the equilibrium ; because, as soon as foreign countries as a whole cease consuming British goods, the policy of a general customs union will secure for ever the British Colonial market.

But the fact of the excessive superfluity of

floating capital drawn from the whole world is more serious. The supreme measurer of values, which is money, is useful only in so far as it is in relation to the traffic in products for consumption. Acquiring it and hoarding it up will finally make it valueless; it is exchanged without loss, but as for letting it out at interest, there is now scarcely anything to be got by that. The bank-rate has been as low as  $\frac{7}{8}$ , less than 1 per cent. ; and consols are about at par, and yield  $2\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. Capitalist government has drawn from its own self its proper definition, reducing it to the absurd, that is taking away its interest. Works multiply themselves as expenditure is economised ; and the net profit has so increased and been so unequally divided that there is now a class saturated with wealth, and has offered its capital to such an extent that scarcely anything can be got from it, because nobody eats, drinks, or breathes gold ; and the monopoly of an article which possesses merely a relative usefulness has almost completely destroyed the yield of the monopolised article.

To take another view of it. The resources of credit and speculation are so subtle, and things brought about by capital have multiplied to such an extent, that the arrival of the moment of the receipt of no yield at all is hastening onwards still faster. Banks have invented paper circulation, tripling the power of money, in order to triple the yield of interest ; capitalists have invented joint-stock

companies in order to federate small capitals lying idle ; and they soon invented bonds, debentures, or obligations at fixed interest, to hook the cautious people of small means that were obliged to look for a sure return of their money, so as to get right to the bottom of the social layers and suck up all the money there might be there ; and finally, since the capitalist lost himself in the immense multitude of securities, a thick forest in which brigandage swarms, there were invented trusts, institutions whose object is to unite capitalists for the purpose of purchasing securities and distributing proportionately the different interests and dividends. The capitalist no longer has the trouble of selecting his assortment—somebody else does it for him.

This absolute suppression of capital is unnatural. Capitalism, pure and simple, has necessarily brought on the reduction of the yield, which is now being accentuated and will be ratified in the century upon which we are about to enter. Usury being abolished, capital is nothing more than the profit of work, monetised, circulating, but not reproductive or capable of getting children, to use a Dutch expression. This main fact was the net impression produced in me by the spectacle of the wealth unequalled in any people in the world, and a spectacle right before me, not a history of the past. And side by side with this fact are the growing strength and education of the working classes ; and

further on, a phenomenon of the greatest importance, the affiliation of an enormous number of capitals in protective institutions, of which the trades unions, with balances of three million pounds, and receipts of five or six millions, are one of the most conspicuous examples.

Stanley Jevons, that powerful mind cut off so young, whose clear view penetrated through the veil of some of the most complex problems of the economy of wealth, formulated the law by which the floating capital of any society increases in proportion to its real property.

Each improvement, as it is usually called, every plot of land that is cultivated for the first time, every mine opened up, every line of steamers, every line of railway, every artificial harbour, all the works of economic civilisation give rise to an increase of yield, either through the economy in work, or through the abundance of produce, that they bring about.

Under the capitalist rule in which the world has lived from the age of discoveries in the sixteenth century, these surpluses or economies have been converting themselves into capital, that is to say, into a sum destined to the acquisition of fresh properties, and of new gains and causes of enrichment. The valuation of capital, however, is given according to the average profit from property, and on this profit is based the rate of interest.

Interest is not in direct proportion to the greater

or smaller wealth of any society, or to the greater or less abundance of capital ; it is in proportion to the average yield from property. Thus the young nations of America, where the natural wealth to be explored is great, pay much higher interest on capital than in the towns of old Europe that have already been worked out, sucked dry, and, so to speak, made the very most of.

The intervention, then, of some intermediate element or commodity in the system of exchange soon creates speculation in itself, and in the ever-increasing change of hands that goods pass through, gambling, that is mercantile speculation applied to capital, invades all minds. The delirium of riches assaults all classes. Madness takes possession of every head. The gambling drives men out of their wits by enticing them into the temptation of freeing themselves from the pre-ordained rule of toil, without remembering that toil is the reward as well as the condition of human life. Idleness is opposed to our temperament. Gambling stands self-condemned by its own absurdity ; since there is no man more enslaved, more completely a victim to his own hallucination, than he whom we constantly see devoured by the anxiety of gain, by the fear of loss, by the fury against combinations, by the crises brought about by bold strokes, and by the torpor of despair.

Formerly gambling was a vice, that is to say, an exceptional and condemned game practised by

reprobate people. Formerly speculation was exclusively practised by people in trade, a class set apart, governed by its own laws and generally looked upon with mingled fear and disdain. Now gambling and speculation are common in society—the exception has become the rule. The vice has become the fashion. The precept of the Scotch widow—"Make money, my son, make money; honestly if you can, but make it," has become gospel. That which was formerly but the sleight-of-hand of the thimble-rigger is now a mode of procedure current among people embroidered with dignities and titles, and moving in grave and pompous circles.

The very language is changed. The "bag-out" of the Stock Exchange, in ordinary business language, is also used in cosmopolitan French, for Paris, the Antioch of pleasure of modern times, is also an international oracle. In business language the word *sérieux*, applied to a man, does not mean that he is worthy of respect, but that he possesses what is called *de la surface*, that is, that he is able, or appears to be able, to meet the responsibility he incurs. Fraudulent and shady transactions, or anything else of the kind, do not detract from the *sérieux*, him for whom it is enough to possess *les reins solides*.

In this way life becomes an exercise in all that gets rid of ideas of duty, order, justice, and morality. "Runners" go about through the dark forest of



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society, touting, sounding, preparing for the leap, with their claws unsheathed, their ears pricked up, and holding their breath, kept in bounds only by fear—that of being shipwrecked in the whirlpool of the law.

When the imagination of the Greeks appeared in myths under the guise of nature, they placed under a myth of this kind, that of *Hermès*, the deity that the Romans called *Mercury*, two classes of people, those of dealers and thieves. And in primitive times, as at the present day among savage people, commerce consists exclusively in astuteness. Civilisation became more moral, up to the point of rendering this instrument useful and fertile in the distribution of the world's goods, just in the same way that it raised the primitive fetish to the rank of medicine. Here is food for thought—the simple and honoured practices of commerce are controlled by what is termed *les affaires*, returning spontaneously to its primitive nature. Why? For the reason given by Stanley Jevons. Because wealth is large and ready money superabundant in consequence of the complete organisation at which Europe has arrived. Because money is elbowing itself with desperation in search of profits, and because interest is going down every day, and capital is losing value in proportion. And in the midst of the concert of incomparable wealth the players on the instrument of it are flying from the stage to make the object of their ambition

heard, and to compose for a new world. The delirium of gambling and speculation unconsciously expresses the fear of the future, and very clearly that of the present.

Capital is trembling and gathers under the protection of powerful empires—it goes to Russia and to Britain to buy into the funds. The yield from these sources is diminutive, two-and-a-half to three per cent. Sums that fifty years ago produced opulence now yield only a bare subsistence. The temptation is created, and the door opened to the imagination. On the one hand there is money and hankering after high interest, and on the other there is the inventive genius of the shady enterpriser. What more is wanted?

It is not difficult to mark the successive movements of speculation, parallel to the progress and the spread of riches. In olden times an industrial company or undertaking consisted, in an elementary way, of the meeting of a few individuals who went shares in some concern agreed upon, running the risks and dividing the profits. Afterwards occurred the idea of rendering the shares transferable, and there appeared the *share*, capable of being passed from one to another, and the law fixed the limit of responsibility to the nominal amount of the share. The *joint stock limited* companies, an English invention of the present century, are the point of departure of a movement rapidly precipitated, that has gone on producing the gigantic

ebullition of the last ten years, a storm of paper, shaken in clouds through the air, of various colours and dotted all over with figures, going up, like a waterspout that sucks up the frothy waves of the innocents who, with open purse, offer it, the result of their self-denial, to the quacks whose business consists in rigging the market. How simple, honest, and good, by the side of Stock Exchange "runners," does Balzac's Gaudissart appear to us, pushing in the provinces the cephalic oil of the lover Papinot!

As soon as joint stock companies and shares appeared, there appeared also the raw material of the business in securities, formerly limited to the relatively small amounts of the public funds. No one is unaware of the gigantic proportions acquired in this century by national debts; but it is not only this kind of merchandise that has given Bourses one of the highest places in the economic mechanism of the world. It is not the only security, or even the principal one, as we are now looking at it. In the market for securities were negotiated, as a matter of fact, side by side, public funds with fixed interest, and bank and company shares of uncertain dividend. The public who were unacquainted with business, the small capitalist who wanted to create a fixed income for himself independent of the cast of the dice of commerce, naturally gave the preference to the class of public funds, the amount of which had been considerably

raised by the wars at the beginning of the century. These causes hindered the consolidation of large capitals in the industrial revolution that was near at hand, the construction of the net of railways all over the world ; moreover, the clearness of vision of business men recognised that if the capital could be got to be subscribed at a low fixed interest, based on the rate of that of the national debt, there would be enormous profits to be drawn from these enterprises formed with borrowed money. The shareholders in such concerns would divide among themselves the excess of profit yielded by the huge capital issued, at the same time that they would have the absolute management, acquired at a very low price and sometimes at none at all, of colossal sums of money embarked in the enterprises sketched out to suit themselves. But how to carry out this in practice? Make the securities of the new kind like those of the public funds ; give the companies a sort of government character. This was what was started in France, in the middle of the century, for the construction of the railway system and for the institution of the *crédit prénial*. In this case, by an able combination, the mortgage guaranteed the interest on the debentures, just as in the other the Government guaranteed it.

*Debentures*, invented in France, with *shares*, invented in England, were added to the former material of the Stock Exchange, that is to say, to the public funds. England formed the idea of the

joint-stock company—France invented the private transferable debt, transforming companies into veritable states, and the monied population into a new kind of feudalism.

From France also came the invention of *founders' shares*. By means of guaranteed debentures the scattered savings of the public were called together for the purpose of industry and public works. Mobilised into paper they circulated, along with shares, by the side of the public funds. Great profits that theoretically belonged to the state or to the subscribers of the money, managed to get more into the hands of the promoters of a concern. Thus a share in the North of France Railway, from a loan of 400 francs, has now got to be worth 1900 or 2000, because it annually earns 70 francs. The shareholders have multiplied the value of their property five-fold.

Such large profits opened the eyes of the covetous. Such majestic enterprises are not constructed without anointing many hands. If the initiative of the share capital was important, so also was that of the man-of-business agent, the knight of industry. To pay them in hard cash might cause the ring of the metal to be heard, but to give them an interest in the future of the concern might be done without attracting attention. Hence come *founders' shares*, or beneficiary shares, securities that cost nothing and anticipate the future, and having their value in "expectations," as is said of young ladies who are

engaged to be married and have relations well off. This new era is marked by the undertaking of the Suez Canal, with which is united the name of Lesseps, the real and almost historical incarnation of Balzac's Gaudissart.

The Stock Exchange, so to speak, has got something to suit all tastes and excite every kind of cupidity, and can cast its net over every kind of saving hoarded by all classes. The cool and careful man subscribed to the funds of countries of the first rank ; after this, in order to draw the savings out of the pocket-book, came the debts of less respectable countries, Turkish, Egyptian (before the British occupation), Peruvian, Argentine, etc. He could have guaranteed railway obligations as solid as public funds, also non-guaranteed obligations, but for which the service of the debt was assured. It is true that he was at the mercy of tricks like those played by the celebrated bandit, Jay Gould, ten times a millionaire ; but this kind of alacrity on the part of the adventurer on the Bourse was not yet frequent.

For the rich man shares, more or less uncertain, in banks, companies, etc., earn an irregular profit, but on this account one in excess of the regular bank rate. For fervid imaginations founders' shares are the thing, pledges of promises for the future and of gilded hopes.

And all this, which one might say did not exist at the beginning of the century, became by the



middle of it series of heaps of paper representing every kind of wealth, landed, industrial, commercial, banking ; turned over, quoted, stirred over again every day, according to the comings and goings of covetousness and avarice. All the mobilised wealth, all the money of the people, is turned round in a whirlpool, and passes like the dissolving view of a magic lantern before the eyes of those who have nothing, exciting their cupidity, watering their bad instincts with hope, laying bare human vileness, and canonising money and worshipping it as a god.

At meetings of tens of thousands of shareholders Lesseps, Emperor of Panama, speaks to his people and governs them by means of bulletins like Napoleon's, and has his Press paid so much a line to sing the magnificent prospects of the undertaking, the future profits of which were largely swallowed up in the pockets of brokers, journalists, and orators, in the boudoirs of *cocottes* and at the tables of the Café Anglais. From being spread among the people, capital came under the rule of the cadger and the trickster.

The series of inventions is, however, not yet exhausted. During these last years English imagination, which had taken credit to itself above Continentals for the invention of shares, again occupied the place of honour when it invented one-pound shares for African gold and diamond mining enterprises. Do you measure well the

mental grasp of this idea? What is the worth of a pound, five-and-twenty francs, four-and-a-half milreis? Less than even sometimes a bottle of wine. They are tentatives to gambling, and mere pretences to be capital. Civilisation has spread wealth and speculation has shattered it. A capital of millions is got together by invisible crumbs. Who is the owner of it? Nobody! Capital has got in this way to its abstract expression, indicative of what it really is at the end of the century; a mark for gambling, an imagination to build hopes upon, a trapeze on which speculation plays its antics, enriching or impoverishing the players, and promoting the circulation of the metallic blood of society. Before there came a grain of gold from Africa, even before the mines were discovered,—before anything at all took place, the South African pound shares were worth four pounds. To-morrow they will be worth what the efforts of the gamblers make them; but between to-day and to-morrow, the money has passed quietly and indifferently from the purses of one set of people to those of another, this costing about the amount lost in the expeditions and the corpses of those that are left behind. There were also lost millions of money and many lives in the Panama Canal, and then there were complaints. Why? Because a five hundred francs share seems a lot of money, and when it gets down to nothing one feels it, while a one-pound share does not count—its loss is not felt.

To reduce capital to a real abstraction, and then to shatter it, is the latest genial invention. By this means the Transvaal has been colonised, under the shadow of speculations that have quoted one-pound shares at two hundred without the shade of a dividend. It is not foreseen that new inventions come to the aid of men's imagination in the sense of attaining experimentally the exact definition attached to wealth since the time of Plato. The teaching has been realised—money is an abstraction, and only a signal to set in motion the dance of the passions excited by greed.

## XXXV

### STOCK EXCHANGE OPERATIONS AND CRISES

NO wonder that this giddiness produces crises. Bagehot, the celebrated author of *Lombard Street*, after describing the English capitalist mechanism in times already old, while recognising its instability, confesses that it is the best way to explore the world economically, if England is to fulfil her mission of centralising commercial and industrial profits in herself.

It is no new thing to learn that in the fields of speculation riches, by the nature of things, concentrate themselves in the hands of a few rich people, and that this concentration does not bring the same consequences as those of the former concentration of land in the hands of the aristocracy. Now everything is alive; the wheel of fortune is not hampered; it is incessantly going round. And if the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few individuals is the case in any nation whatever, Great Britain, in spite of the competition of France and also of Germany, still rules the world from a moneyed point of view.

The character that capitalism has successively taken, attaining its ultimate consequences, is manifested in several orders of knighthood who inevitably bring on crises more or less general. The adventurers come out crowned at last, while the victims are the battalions of anonymous speculators, soldiers, as it were, in the army of finance, "food for business" (as a Napoleon—such as Jay Gould—would call them, if he were on the Stock Exchange), or rustic tenants of the new lords. The houses of cards are fatal when they are only half-built, and then crumble down and smother the bold adventurers among the ruins.

It is not worth while to speak of the ordinary commonplaces of the Stock Exchange with its daily gamble, its "carrying forward" operations—a tide that is constantly ebbing and flowing, and so goes on in its usual way. In these notes all that can be done is to mention the memorable storms, determined by exceptional circumstances, that happen in the game of Bourse.

National funds are not now the principal material. To issue a loan is a risky process, even when it concerns rich and well-governed countries. It is said that the last Russian loan, said to be subscribed for several times over by the public, was never issued. Subscribers would not have it at the price; and the subscription was feigned—a thing that happens in most cases, sometimes through want of confidence in the solidity of

States, and sometimes through the excessive price of issue. The normal, natural, and simple way, of Government saying how much they wanted and opening their offices to subscribers, has now become impossible, as a veritable feudalism governs the market of capital. A loan is first contracted for by a group that guarantees the issue and hands over the needful amount. Then the group offers it to the public, the public pays for it, and the profit is made; if it were not, the portfolios of the banks would be full of paper waiting buyers. Sometimes it happens that the bankers cannot unload; and they then give way, as happened with the house of Baring, smothered under the weight of Argentine issues; or it happens that they come to a barefaced default, like Ephrussi did with the Portuguese loan of 1890.

These bank failures, brought about by hazardous adventures, are perhaps the weightiest causes of money crises. But these crises sometimes arise from just the opposite cause, when the boldness of bankers is excited and enhanced by the greed of legions of subscribers, eager to get a premium or intoxicated by the hope of the future, judiciously puffed by a Press paid for the purpose. In the little Portuguese world there happened seventeen years ago, in 1876, a crisis of this kind on a small scale. Money went about pretty freely, and the Government issued on its own account forty thousand obligations for the construction of the Minho

and Douro railways. Ten times as much money as the Government wanted was subscribed at the offices opened. At the same time the Commercial Bank of Guimaraes had an issue of shares, the premium given with which was a quarter of a share for subscribers of from 1 to 25 shares, a half for those of from 25 to 50, one for those of from 51 to 100, and so on, till those who took more than 4200 got  $\frac{3}{4}$  per cent. of the subscriptions. Here we see how Portugal, always a great adventurer, did not forget her former traditions, even in 1876, before launching again, at the present time, into the dark ocean whose waves are made of paper money.

Putting aside public funds, since we have touched upon those of banks, let us see what shape adventure and speculation of this kind has taken.

The former crises in England, provoked by the over issue of notes, are now matters of history, since which notes have become of secondary importance behind the immense mass of cheques, promissory notes, and other kinds of paper-money, periodically settled in the clearing-house. The use of deposits, left subject to withdrawal at notice and on account of the higher interest granted, is a mode now adopted by the thorough-going banker. It is the expedient of the select gentry of industry, who soar higher every day, swallowing the pips at the risk of being poisoned. A serious and steady-going bank, that has a regard for itself, does not fall into this class of operations, it has other

means at its disposal for the benefit of the directors. They are of two kinds—fictitious amount of subscription, and fictitious quotation. The first is so much the easier, as the public are so choked up with money that it is easy to found banks. The second is done on the Stock Exchange, by a process which becomes puerile as it is so easy and elementary.

In fact, in the condition of hallucination about money matters of the public mind, it appears very easy to get rich as soon as one has got one's mind moulded into that shape that conceives a certain order of combinations in which it seems no robbery to defraud the general bulk of gamblers. Just the same frame of mind was in the old smugglers, who conspired to rob the State but would have scorned to take a farthing from a private individual. Abstraction is responsible for many errors.

A bank is got up. I, without a penny, subscribe for a thousand shares; I go and pawn these thousand shares at a neighbouring bank or even in this bank itself, and get enough money to pay the deposit. If the bank justifies its existence and is successful, I get the premium; if the house of cards tumbles down, there succeed a crisis and bankruptcy, things that do not matter to one who has no money. Heads I win; tails you lose. Meanwhile, as long as this St. Martin's little summer lasted, I lived gaily at the cost of the simplicity of the innocent who subscribed his money or



deposited it. In order to capture the innocents in their pigeon hunt, the means are to blow the bellows of advertisement on the Stock Exchange and in the Press, so that the real subscriber may come up at the call and empty his purse in buying at the highest possible prices the shares subscribed to by myself, just in the same way that Governments maintain the artificial quotation of their securities by means of the money in their treasuries. They do it even free of cost, even getting the carrying-over charges when the price goes up. Thus it was with the Royal Railway Company of Portugal. The share rises a little, and then goes right up; improbable and absurd quotations are reached, as was the case years ago in the frenzy of the Union Générale.

It is in this way that speculation rises to its ideal height. Capital is made an abstraction of. The share-certificate is a mere subject to bet upon. There is no proper relation between the intrinsic value and the quotation; and if we have already seen how the English imagination coloured abstraction at the bottom of the scale with the one-pound share, that is without any apparent cost, we have now seen how imagination colours abstraction at the top of the scale, when a share of a bank formed up in the clouds fetches three thousand francs. In fact, it is not bought at all—it is gambled. There is a hope that the rise may grow, and that the three thousand francs of to-day may become

the five thousand of to-morrow ; that the holder of it to-day may make a profit of the difference ; that the balloon of hope may go on inflating and swell the pockets of the gamblers, like the quiet and old-fashioned Portuguese game of "burro" (donkey) ; the only question being to get higher than the knave, so as not to be donkey. So the rule is, that the professional speculators do not remain donkeys ; the donkeys are those who have been clipped, and have their ears up, braying mercy—the poor nameless ones who are the pippins in the Stock Exchange "bag-out." But when things take big proportions, and the hallucination attacks the men that mean business themselves, there comes the fatal crash, dragging down in the same ruin both the tricked and the tricksters, as happened in the case of the Union Générale, a recent one among so many others both before and after it.

It remains, however, to note one more species that has assumed vast proportions in these later times. It is the syndicate called by the English a "*trust*." We are not speaking now of syndicates for issuing stocks, designed and required by the feudal constitution of modern capitalism, but of other syndicates, framed through the desire for making money. Monopoly of some kind or another has been at all times one of the rulers of commerce ; but at no time whatever did money hold the sway that it now holds, or was the world ever

so hand-in-hand in business matters as it now is. To get the monopoly of some article, to buy of all producers and then to dictate the price to the consumers, is an operation so simple and easy, and so much in the nature of things, that no doubt it is destined to a brilliant future.

If in cotton, wheat, or coffee, there is gambling going on in the same way that there is over public funds or commercial and industrial securities; this kind is, however, different from syndicates for the monopoly of a certain article, like india-rubber for instance, like the ill-fated monopolies of salt and oil, like, in fine, the metal monopoly that had for its termination the tragic catastrophe of the Comptoir d'Escompte, to which the name of "the rich man's Panama" attached.

In syndicates of this kind the same risk is run as in subscription "firm" to an issue of stocks, with the difference, however, that in this case the arts and means used on the Stock Exchange and in the Press to give an artificial or conventional quotation to the paper nearly always allow it to be placed, while in monopolies of articles of consumption a fatal and positive limit is placed by the rate of consumption itself, and by the elevation of price soon bringing increase of production. This is what happened with copper. Having contracted for all that could be produced within a certain time, the Société des Métaux forgot to reckon that the increased price of sale would be the cause of the

re-opening of many mines shut down by the former low price. Obligated to buy all and always, it burst with the weight of the heaps of copper, dragging with it the "Comptoir," and involving the suicide of one of the generals in that notorious conflict towards the end of the century.

The height of the game consists in issues of stock, industrial companies, bank shares, and monopoly syndicates, without omitting an infinite number of smaller ventures, all contributing to give a character to the general fever of the game that is peculiar to the end of our century. For this purpose Bagehot's sound book, *Lombard Street*, should be read, and the mechanism of British capital, the general type, will be seen. In this book modes of play are exposed.

This is the necessary, inevitable, and intimate consequence of the condition of capital in which we live. It is also the consequence of the frequency and extent of the crises that ravage markets, bringing about disasters and suicides, and bringing to complete revolution and anarchy the regular distribution of wealth caused by work.

Is it meant to be said that crises are something new and the special outcome of the above-mentioned condition? No, not by any means; and these crises of speculation, since they do not destroy wealth entirely, but only a very small part of it, are of very little relative importance to business in general; though they are of great

importance to the stability and morality of nations, because they put distribution into disorder, they excite despair, which is the child of covetousness, and they bring on anarchy and destroy social ties.

But, in fact, it may be said that they do not destroy an atom of absolute wealth, although, disordering the distribution of it in an immoral way, they pervert the true notion of wealth, which is entirely a relative one under a positive and concrete appearance.

A society of people moderate in its habits, pursuits, and desires, may call itself rich, though of money it may possess little. A society in which the sum total of wealth is enormous, but where there are multitudes of hungry beggars by the side of many a Croesus, will always be, not a society poor in money, but one poor in order and stability, which are also of value. Crises of speculation, the children of unhealthy distribution of riches, do not do more than aggravate every time a condition of chronic disorder. They scatter wealth, but do not destroy it. The balloons inflated with silvery fictions burst; and there is a transfer on balance from the purses of the unlucky to those of the lucky.

Other crises that do not destroy capital come from the deficiency of specie, though this cause, so grave at other times, may become of minor import in our days by the various devices of paper money. From all times down to our own the

drain of specie towards the East has been continual. Pliny says that the Romans exported yearly six million sesterces to India. Humboldt calculated that the absorption of specie by the East from 1550 to 1600 was 2,500,000 piastres a year, from 1716 to 1790, 10,000,000, and from 1791 to 1809, 25,000,000, principally the result of the consumption of tea.

Latterly, the introduction of opium altered the state of things, but modern statistics put down from 1862 to 1868 an exportation of specie of about £44,000,000, or about £7,000,000 per annum. This gold and silver goes and does not come back; and since the supply of the precious metal from mines, principally of gold, remains in arrear of the demand, it is clear, from this reason and others, that the markets feel this. This happened in 1861-3, in England, with the cotton drain, brought on by the civil war in the United States; and it happened in 1825, when the treasury bonds, redeemable the next day, were discontinued at 2%, that is at 730% per annum; and it happened in 1848, in France, when they were paying a premium of 125 francs in 1000 during the week in which the mint ceased coining gold. But these crises, I repeat, less possible each time, are allied to those of speculation in their common character of not destroying wealth, though they alter the regular distribution of it.

Destructive crises are hardly those that have

for their origin a breakdown or a mistake. They come from famines, wars, and scarcity of crops, when there are physical causes of destruction of capital, or loss in useless works—works in which some or all of the capital is lost. A flagrant instance of this kind is the colossal venture and failure of the Panama Canal. Then the cases of this kind that end seriously also enter into the class of speculative crises, since they are responsible as hazardous schemes. So, putting on one side those happening from physical or organic causes and considering merely those of speculation, one must agree with Stuart Mill, who, agreeing with the theory of Jevons mentioned above, considers these catastrophes as essentially inherent in capitalism itself. The accumulation of movable capital seeking for interest growing progressively with the civilisation of a society, occasions a lowering of interest; hence come enterprises, ventures, and consequent crashes, provoked by the instinct of greed, and operating, like thunderstorms, in clearing the air and purifying the sky until, little by little, the elements of a fresh tempest accumulate.

## XXXVI

### PAST AND FUTURE OF CAPITALISM

IT is evident that it is not in the nature of the animal called man to lead a troubled and tormented life like that established by a chronic state of gambling, since wealth has become more general and distributed, and, grown to an almost inconceivable size, has determined the state of constitutional sloth and covetousness to which all aspire, enticed by the desire of enjoyment. And this is also the reason why the English, constitutionally addicted to this diet, which is the very soul of its civilisation, produce in us an impression so strange and paradoxical.

It is evident that men are worth something better than this. We have within us a sentiment of order and justice that protests; and from this instinct, even in its lower or more animal forms—forms that are the mere expression of anarchist doctrines, rank flowers born in the swamp of capitalism giving way to its own bent and irrigated with the lust for gain—we feel we want something.

But if we are worth something better, if this



dance of millions in which society is carried away is contrary to nature, there must be also some sufficient cause to bring about such a grave perversion of things. This cause is the evolution itself of modern societies. In order to show what this is, it is necessary to cast our eyes rapidly over past times.

Suppose some imaginary nation, something like China, for instance, that has no external trade, so to speak, a nation living on its natural productions and its own labour, consuming just what it produces, developing by itself as an economic body on its own account, without relations, dependencies, or authority over other people. On the other hand, suppose a nation like Great Britain, for instance, in which the soil does not support the population—here all is transformed; towns and factories, external trade, dependencies, and a dominion of commerce exercised over other nations, are the proper base of the wealth of the whole.

It is evident that in the first hypothesis, the primary and constitutional idea will be regularity in business, the normal state of distribution of wealth entirely under the protection of the laws, because from this regularity come the peace and the fortune of the people. But for the very reason that wealth in the other comes from the exploration of foreign countries, and on that account escapes the action of the laws, it is also evident that the primary and constitutional idea will be,

not the regularity of distribution, but the means of acquisition. The one is a society according to the normal state of economy, while the other is a society according to the normal state of commerce or money-getting. The one toils and shares, while the other conquers and takes toll.

Now this, which we thus formulate in an abstract way, is the pure historic truth of modern Europe. Before the sixteenth century, before the discoveries, the life of the European world was isolated ; society located in different nations was divided into its round of duties ; the earth was cultivated according to laws intimately interwoven with the constitutions of the countries ; and commerce, considered as a subordinate function, was confined to the distribution of native products, or to the exchange of profits, few and of small value, between different European nations. Regulating this mode of economic existence, there accompanied it a condition of moral conscience which, believing sincerely in the rewards and punishments of the future life, asserted itself against usury, gambling, making a profit on exchange, against everything that in later times, when fear of religion had vanished, came to form the notions of the modern man.

Maritime discoveries in Asia, Africa, and America gave to Europe a new economic feature. It soon found itself transformed from the one ideal to the other ; because it got to rule the world

in just the same way that in olden times Rome ruled almost all over the Mediterranean. It became the metropolis and the manufactory of the world. It got to live on its explorations. It got prodigiously rich, but by that same means it had to go out of the usual routine of distribution. On the other hand, the riches brought from beyond the sea destroyed the old habits of frugality in food, clothing, and habitation. The cities got covered with palaces; the palaces got full of precious furniture and tapestries, on the tables appeared new exotic productions: sugar, tea, coffee, chocolate, curious fruits and flowers, with porcelain and jewels and Oriental filigree, began to be seen. Distribution got irregular just according as people got rich. It was impossible to establish laws or rules for adventurous voyages, and for great speculations in products fetched from beyond sea out of countries over which Europe had no jurisdiction—products that change of habits rendered even of the first necessity to life in Europe. When this road was open the fever grew. Beginning with commerce, it continued with banking credit, and ends in gambling when things get to the point of saturation. This we have seen in our century, especially in the second half of it, with the almost incredible results that especially the applications of steam to industry have exercised over the economic equilibrium of the world. In the series of the movements of the economic history of modern

times, this second half of the nineteenth century will be as historical, and as serious in consequences, as the first half of the sixteenth.

It is not out of place to here fix certain important dates for the festival days of modern trade. The century opens with the first steamer between New York and Albany in 1807, then the lighting London with gas in 1812, the beginning of the printing of the *Times* by steam in 1814, the first transatlantic voyage by the steamer *Saxmiah* in 1819, the opening of the first railway, the Stockton and Darlington, in 1825, the invention of the electric telegraph by Cook and Wheatstone in 1837, and of photography by Daguerre in the following year.

The elements of material transformation, and the work itself, were started in the first half of the century, in the second half we have felt the consequences and are gathering in the results. The pressure caused by toil increases progressively, and feverish circulation augments at every moment. Are there crises and catastrophes? Yes, and boilers also burst, and only strong men die of apoplexy.

In 1843 trade was opened up with China; in 1848 gold was discovered in California, and in 1852 in Australia; in 1859 petroleum was discovered in Pennsylvania. In 1855 Bessemer made his improvements in steel; in 1866 Europe and America were connected by telegraph, and in 1891 London

and Paris by telephone. In 1869 the Suez Canal was opened, in 1870 the Mont Cenis tunnel, and in 1885 the St. Gothard. What now remains to be done in this Europe transformed by the world's riches?

The European population (including in this designation the Neo-European States of America) doubled themselves between 1840 and 1890. They were at the former date 180,000,000; they are now over 360,000,000. Ten years hence they will be 400,000,000. These people had at their disposal in 1840 a little less than 6,000,000 horse-power in steam; now they have 36,000,000, in mines, ships, factories, and railways. If we reckon the strength of a man at 300 units and that of the horse-power of a steam-engine at 4000, we shall find, comparing the units of total energy in the two periods, that five men can do as much work now as eight in 1840. Can you now calculate the effect of Stanley Jevons' law of the progressive increase of movable capital in direct proportion to that of immovable?

In 1850 the railways measured 25,000 miles; now they are very little short of 300,000. The shipping measured 7,000,000 tons, 6,500,000 sail, and 500,000 steam; now they are 22,000,000, or 14,500,000 steam and 7,500,000 sail. The foreign commerce of nations, that was £800,000,000, went up to £3,000,000,000. International commerce by sea went up from 25,000,000 tons to 150,000,000 or 160,000,000.

Public debts absorb a fourth part of the receipts of nations. It is calculated that in loans used up in paying for war there was a loss of £2,000,000,000—£400,000,000 in the Crimea, £500,000,000 in the civil war in the United States, £400,000,000 in the Franco-German war, £200,000,000 in the Russo-Turkish, and £500,000,000 in guns and iron-clads, to preserve peace and earn something for factories. But it is reckoned that another £2,000,000,000 have been spent by governments in reproductive works—£800,000,000 in railways and telegraphs, £100,000,000 in liberating the Russian serfs, £500,000,000 in roads and bridges, £200,000,000 in improvements in towns, and the rest in miscellaneous works.

These expenses of government come to nearly £4,000,000,000; the horse-power of steam used in industry, at £50 per horse-power, amounts to £1,800,000,000; and the tonnage of shipping, at £22 a ton, to £484,000,000; so that it requires no stretch of the imagination to see that the capitalised amount of money bringing in profit, or, in other words, of movable capital looking about for interest, has risen in the last half of the century to the almost incomprehensible sum of nearly £7,000,000,000.

It will thus be understood how in this half century the fever of speculation, the intoxication of greed, and the delights of wealth, have assailed the minds of people who, without a God to worship

or a tradition to venerate, when everything is referred to the individual and to this life, when everything has become external and for effect, place their enthusiasm and their entire hope in the animal possession of the woman, who even has her price, of the table that is paid for, and of the showy palace that passes from hand to hand, in the weird excitement produced by the fever of those dread hours during which the click of the tape spinning out the prices of securities in the "House" sounds like the trumpets at the last judgment summoning generations without end into the valley of Jehoshaphat.

Gambling, speculation, winning and losing, going on without end. The only thing new about it is that what used to be counted a vice has been transformed into the regular life of certain classes of society. Shylock and Harpagon were monsters of evil growth exposed on the stage to teach the people good, or show the playwright's power over the ideal. Speculation always; yet the traders of the time of the discoveries themselves, the beginning of the growth of what we may call to-day the "mad era," obeyed other calls. Money was for them not an idol or an end of itself, as it is for the regular miser. Between the Medicis and Gobseck there is a great gulf fixed. Commerce then ennobled. Bankers were princes in reality. Artists and *dilettanti*, believers in the order of a society that gave them the palm of fortune, they

showed themselves worthy of her, showing in themselves the nature that made the people copy the man.

If Italy principally gave birth to the generation of rich men of the time of the Renaissance, so, like the rich of Rome, we have had the same thing in Spain, adventurers like little kings, who, having got rich somehow or other in their expeditions beyond sea, got into their heads a notion of becoming noblemen, and, with all their nobility, used their riches in satisfying the ostentations of their child-like vanity ; but also, and at the same time, took particular care to build those realms of convents and churches, with which they thought to get rid of their former sins, that have provoked the irony of the practical set of to-day—a blind set that cannot see that their own imbecile material misuse of life is still sillier ! Convents and churches take a higher rank than houses for *cocottes* and tables at restaurants. The illusions of a past age produced a life incomparably finer than the diversions in which we are now dragging along a road insurpassably dreary, in spite of the permanent excitements of coffee, tobacco, morphine, and pruriency.

While we are drawing near to the age in which we are to get the very utmost out of the world's search for money, we are also drawing near to the moment in which we perceive the entire worthlessness of riches. To the man whose belly is his god, and who is incapable of other desires, superfluity



of money brings tedium and satiety. And see these dragging along through old age!

And if we have already succeeded in noting how the art of capitalism has attained in two ways the ideal of abstraction, reducing capital to a gambling counter; if we have become acquainted with the one-pound share of which the original value is inappreciable, and the bank share upon which heaps of money are betted without the slightest regard to the real value it may possess; if we have noted all this in so far as the instrument is concerned, we may now say that we have done so in so far as concerns the soul of the man of business.

For him also gain is an hallucination and money an abstract quantity. The miser of former days no longer exists. Gobseck makes us laugh, so much has the world advanced since the time of Balzac! The Stock Exchange gambler plays for millions and disposes of them, draws, discounts, transfers, and carries over millions, sometimes without having a couple of hundred pounds in his drawer. "*Les affaires, c'est l'argent des autres,*" is said in a celebrated comedy. The amounts of it are to be calculated in the imaginations, sounds, enchantment, and intoxication of a dissipated life. It is much better to have nothing; the old rich bankers do not take part in "business," says Bagehot in other words, and he is easily comprehended. The rich man has got to get interest for his money, while he who works with that of other people is

contented with the commission on the transaction. Exceptionally to this, the rich man risks his own fortune and sometimes loses it, as happened to Barings among others.

Thus capital, this abstraction, has nothing in common with gold ; nor has the fever of business with the love of money. The speculator of our own day is, as a rule, rather a scatterer. Ostentation forms a part of his programme and usual features. Advertisement being the soul of his operations, ladies, carriages, palaces, receptions, all the theatrical part of life, are indispensable to strengthen the credit that fortune, fashion, and caprice bring him in waves that are not always without froth.

But all these sketches, rapidly thrown off in order to paint the real prince of our varied society, result in a sad and incoherent portrait. If you ask him from whom, by whom, and for whom he lives, he will be surprised at once, because he has never thought about this. He lives from hand to mouth, at the mercy of chance, without thought or design. He lives as he sees his neighbour live, only yielding to the instinct to outdo him and get the better of him. He lives in the dark world of the unknowing ; though, with the natural superciliousness in which he feels his strength, he disdains and laughs at those who think differently from himself.

If then he is worthy of sorrow, like all those

who never think about their proper existence, worthy indeed of pity is the society that gives acclamation to such men as princes, because it is evidently casting itself along with them into the shades of a life that possesses hardly even instinct.

Obedient to his own disposition, a prince like these becomes so much the more the slave of his passions as the strength of the means in his power is greater. On this account it happens, so often that it may be called the rule, that he is ruined by vanity or woman, a victim to builders or *cocottes*. One gets rid of his money in houses, picture-galleries, and *bric-à-brac*, imitating the real and aristocratic style; while another's feathers get plucked in the boudoir and at the jeweller's, where he struts in concupiscence; another makes an end of everything in carriages and horses, in order to rub shoulders with county families; and all, with the vices inherent in the upstart, make an end of life by wasting it in feverishly building up a fortune, and in the insane work of sacrificing it upon the altars of ridiculous vanity or gross self-indulgence.

And what is the remedy for this? The evil of the day is a hidden one; it is one of conscience and of the absence of an ideal. The malady called the thirst for money has its native home in England; but it is in this home, and for the very reason that it is here, that the mystic reaction against it is shown with the greatest energy.

There comes to the surface the old leaven that fermented Protestantism. Buddhism, brought home by Anglo-Indians, is propagating itself; and the superstition of spiritualism is working on all classes with almost the fervour of religious mania. And at the same rate that the wave of democracy rises, and parallel with it, I think there will be what mathematicians call the *reductio ad absurdum*. Peaceful reform, possible when nations are governed by aristocratic bodies, is impracticable now that they are carried away by the storms of democracy.

Public loans will increase as long as the necessary expenses in paying work-people increase, whether it be for public works, arsenals for guns and ships, or armies transformed into asylums for people hindered from emigrating; they will still more increase also to make business and commissions, and to inflate the balloon in every possible way with the smoke of public money, as long as capital begs day by day for the love of God that a higher interest may be granted.

Gigantic works will be multiplied; there will be pyramids made like those of Egypt, though inspired by utilitarian sentiment. Who knows? Perhaps a tunnel under the Atlantic. Who knows? Perhaps a bridge over the Mediterranean. Nobody can limit the invention of man; and if perchance electricity gives us the secret of a cheap force, as a substitute for steam, it is incontestable that humanity will yet see another epoch of

magnificent reforms equal to or better than those of the first half of the sixteenth century or the latter half of the nineteenth. Perhaps aerial navigation may be substituted for the noisy railway and the sea-sick making steamer. When it gives us wings, civilisation will take us right away, as in the legend of Icarus. Because if this end of the century be not the end of adventures and discoveries, and humanity has yet got to digest something new, we must recognise that the stomach given us by nature will not be equal to the task. She made some efforts at the first banquet, at the Renaissance; and no one denies that she is suffering from indigestion at this second treat, in our own century. The moral man is depressed, if not annihilated. "Earn and enjoy—earn in order that you may enjoy," is its gospel, as mean as it is incoherent, because earning causes much more pain than working, and enjoyment turns at last into insupportable dislike.

We live among changes, and as soon as anything attains its full growth it vanishes in smoke, loses its concrete reality, and turns into abstraction. Just the same happens with food and drink, with love, and with money. Life is a constant desire, and only goes on steadily when we set before ourselves an object of which the physical attainment is impossible. Whether we set our eyes upon a woman or upon a million, as soon as we pursue them we find ourselves embracing a shadow and

made victims of deception and martyrs of an illusion.

The evil and infirmity of the age are these—it is full to indigestion of the wealth it has got, and has fallen into all the weaknesses of the upstart; and what happens with men happens with things, which only exist as our mind imagines them. What happens with food and drink happens with capital, as we have seen and as is explained by the law of Stanley Jevons. We get so many houses, we make so many improvements, we economise so much and the returns are so large that, having no outlet, fresh capital is beginning to be valueless, and it would have even less value than now if it were not for fantastic schemes daily invented by itself.

The out-and-out proof of this is that Great Britain has converted part of her debt into a  $2\frac{1}{2}$  per cent., and she did not convert more than a part, not because she was unable, but because the rich prevented her. It is necessary that the cord of taxation should be drawn as tight as possible, so as to provide interest for capital. And everywhere the old situation is inverted—the promoter no longer goes behind the capitalist; the capitalist goes behind him whose business it is to find him a means of getting interest.

However, I, like an optimist, believe that the end of it will be that, interest being reduced to the very lowest by the conversion of national debts;

by industrial co-operation among workpeople constitutionally doing away with the need of the intervention of capital in industry ; by the calming of the fever for gambling when the material for it is scarce and animal instincts are satisfied ; by all these means, and by all that may be derived from them, and from the natural revolution of things, European nations first of all, and colonial ones afterwards, will in time gradually re-enter upon a normal life of peace, virtue, and toil.

In that day the laborious and depressing digestion of riches, that began for the people of Europe when they discovered the world, will be over and done with, if in the meantime we do not have the misfortune to discover some new engine to carry us into the regions of the infernal.

## XXXVII

### THE SALVATION ARMY

OF what I may call the "mortmain" institutions, to which I made allusion a little while ago, as the corrective to vices that money engenders in the public, and as the most extravagant that has latterly arisen in this field of eccentricities, is the Salvation Army. I went one day to the magnificent building in Queen Victoria Street to see General Booth, but I could not see him as he was on his way to India ; so Commandant Bramwell Booth, his son, received me. He is a man about forty years old, tall strong, with large chestnut beard, amiable, educated, and deaf as a post. He uses an ear trumpet, and with a little humoring one another on each side we got on very well, because he is a man of a mind open to anything practical, this saviour of humanity.

In the very praiseworthy attempt to regenerate man history records great names ; and each of these is always just a representative of the race that has produced him. Saint Francis of Assisi, uniting the most perfect love with, as it were, supernatural



illumination, proposes the plan of sacrifice and mystic passion. Saint Ignatius is the personification of the Spanish idea, subtle and realistic in the strength of his object, and practical in the choice of his means. Luther is a mixture of grossness and dreaminess, a flower of impulse and strong beer, of cloudy shuffling and profound intuition, like the mystic side of Germany; while General Booth and the Salvation Army, even in their extravagances verging on caricature, are the most genuine English spectacle that I have met.

The Jesuits had already discovered the way to convert the Indians by music. The General applies this rule to his fellow-citizens. I am now going to relate what I learnt in my interview with Commandant Bramwell Booth; but I should like first to show the dimensions of the Salvation Army and of the Social Scheme that it has taken in hand.

The Social Scheme had for its gospel the book by General Booth, *In Darkest England and the Way Out*. It is a work interesting from many points of view. The book opens with a chromolithographed map or plan, in which society appears represented as in the mystic pictures of the Middle Ages! Below there appears the sea covered with three millions of men who are drowning in waves of misery and vice, and among whom are being rowed lifeboats of salvation; on the banks soldiers of the army are hauling in buoys; in the centre is

raised a lighthouse illuminated with mottoes of a saving tendency. At a higher level than the sea appear fields and farms; and higher still beyond the seas, in a glory, are drawn large and bright continents. An ornate arch surrounds the whole, and on it are written, on one side "Salvation Army," on the other "Social Campaign," on the tympanum "Work for All," and on the pillars on which the arch rests are a number of figures with all the statistics of misery and perdition. It is puerile without being original; it is moreover extravagant; but it is of just the sort to suit the native mind.

The social plan, the "Social Scheme," has, however, something in common with previous utopias. It is a thing well known in the world. The extravagance consists only in the means employed. The principle consists, "in forming out of these unfortunates communities of self-helping and self-sustaining people to help and maintain themselves," each one of them being a kind of co-operative society or patriarchal family, governed and disciplined by the principles that have already proved so efficacious in the Salvation Army. It is simple and it is English. This people possesses the inestimable courage of defying every obstacle, in some degree through ignorance of events, but also in a very much larger degree through a blind confidence in its strength.

The General has, therefore, established three

colonies of "salvation"—a "city colony," and an "over-sea colony," represented allegorically in the picture I have described, of which the "over-sea colony," that is the refuge by emigration, only exists on paper ; and the "farm colony," consisting of twelve hundred acres of land at Hadleigh-on-Thames, where there are collected two hundred colonists, poor people from London. The "city colony" constitutes at present the most important part of the Social Scheme. There are fourteen homes or shelters, in which about four thousand persons pass the night ; there are eight eating-houses, or economical soup kitchens, which distribute two millions and a half of rations each year ; there are four workshops in which two thousand men work ; there is an office in which work is found every year for five thousand workmen ; there is another by means of whose efforts there were last year found six hundred persons who had been lost ; there are fourteen asylums in which there were collected fourteen hundred women who had gone astray ; and there is a home into which there were admitted two hundred persons who had just come out of prison. Philanthropy can do no more. The process and the mode are grotesque and provoke laughter ; but for all that they produce a result among the English. And how has all this been done ?

I have before me the accounts of the Salvation Army in 1891, set in business order with extreme

minuteness. It is worthy of a moment of attention. The balance shows in assets £435,971 of real, and £123,021 of personal property, and the liabilities show £370,769 of money due on mortgage, etc., and £188,221 as balance. As is seen, salvation adopts the capitalist modes of credit and security. Let us pass on to the accounts for the year. The Trade Department, or the commercial section of the economical feeding kitchen, bought to the extent of £200,000 and sold to about an equal amount, the rations being sold at cost price. There was in reality a loss of £17,101. The 'colonial' fund obtained £106,000 in donations, spent £64,000, and kept £25,000 for the over-sea colony and £17,000 as balance. Collections, donations, and subscriptions rose to £27,156; the rent of its own property to £33,315, and profits to £18,903; and with this were supported the Booth family and their army, with the various institutions that they maintain, including the expenses of recruiting and instruction in drill.

I know no more extraordinary instance of the hybrid union of individualism and collectivism, or of philanthropy and business capacity. But, as well as this, I believe there is no similar instance of one man—for the General is everything—transforming himself into an enterprise of religion and philanthropy, and succeeding in a single year in turning over money in his transactions to the extent of £800,000.

I wanted to see the shelters of the Salvation Army, and for that purpose I returned to White-chapel at night. The officer received us, and hearing us speak Portugese, answered us in that language. He was a Mr. Taylor, who had been clerk in the house of Messrs. Shore, at Oporto. This incident put him in a still better humour, if that were possible, for showing us everything. It was a vast, well-ventilated, clean, and well-lighted house. On the beams supporting the roof were written texts from the Bible. On the ground in four parallel rows lay the beds in file. Each bed is a box without cover, having a straw mattress at the bottom. The drunken, who form the great majority of the sheltered, cannot roll out of the bed. The counterpanes are of leather or sail-cloth. Why? Mr. Taylor told me it was on account of the parasites. There was no bad smell. These homes, made in imitation of those I had already seen on a former visit, are incomparably better. They cost twopence a night, with a cup of tea, a wash, and a hymn. As we went away a man came up thrusting forward a ragged drunkard. He silently took twopence from his purse and went down, the drunken man going to bed. Many people give alms in that way; if given in any other way the money soon finds its way to the gin-palace.

In one of my several excursions to Hyde Park to hear the popular orators that hold forth there, I

came across one called George Osmond Pavitt, who the night before slept in Whitechapel. He was complaining of having to pay twopence half-penny for a towel, and a half-penny for a piece of carbolic soap. • He said that that morning three hundred men had only one towel to dry themselves with after washing, and that it was better to sleep in the open air than in the beds; that the shelter returned seventeen per cent. profit; that the tea tasted like hot-water and treacle; that at six in the morning, when the bell rang, every one turned out in the street; and that the vermin of some invaded the others, etc. Was he one hard to please? Perhaps. Do the shelters pay seventeen per cent.? The detective who went with me when I visited them told me they did a good business.

But what, in fact, is the Salvation Army?

General Booth was born in 1829, so that he is sixty-three years old, with long white beard and piercingly bright eyes. When fourteen years old he entered the Wesleyan sect, becoming three years afterwards a preacher. At nineteen he preached in London and in Lincolnshire. At twenty-four he became a minister in the sect called the "Wesleyan New Connexion," and continued his missionary career. He married, and Mrs. Booth used to preach along with him, until in June, 1865, they fitted up their establishment in Whitechapel, in the heart of the city of the misery of London, founding the East London Christian

Mission. It was a new sect which, filled with converts made by Mrs. Booth in her journeys through England, was transformed in 1870 into the Christian Mission, a pure Christianity without ritual, so they say. Eight years afterwards, in 1878, the future General had an inspiration—the Christian Mission was a saving army of converted work-people. The name “Salvation Army” was acquired, and with it the idea of the new institution. Mr. Booth transformed himself into a General and Mrs. Booth into a Generaless, and the apostles were Commandants or Captains; and the battalions of Hallelujah Lasses, with fifes and tambourines, set out for the conquest of pagan England. Everything breathed war; the red banner of the army bore the motto “blood and fire,” but not in the literal sense—it was the blood of Our Lord Jesus Christ and the fire of the Holy Ghost. The General observes in the history of his campaigns that the use of flags has accomplished more than people would give credit for, because they keep the soldiers themselves together and animate and excite in them the spirit of enterprise and resolution. All this is puerile, but it is genuinely English.

They divided England into military commands, adopted a uniform, copied military regulations, and spread abroad with the intention of saving the world. The staff of the army is composed of the Booth family. The father and mother are the commanders-in-chief. Then come the sons—Bramwell

Booth, the deaf man whose acquaintance I made, is chief of the staff; Herbert Booth commands the United Kingdom district, and Ballington Booth the United States. Then come the daughters—Eva and Louisa, who are unmarried; Emma Tucker, who takes charge of India; and Catherine Cliborn, who holds France. Then come the daughters-in-law, Mrs. Bramwell Booth, Mrs. Herbert Booth, and Mrs. Ballington Booth. And, finally, the sons-in-law, who have adopted the patriarchal name of the clan of salvation—Arthur B. Cliborn-Booth and L. B. Tucker-Booth. This air of patriarchal times shows how ancient people still are. The Booths have discovered in the salvation propaganda an industry that they are pursuing as a joint family affair.

Figures show a veritably astounding result of what they have constructed. In the first place they have organised a colossal enterprise of publicity. The *War Cry* and *Young Soldier*, weekly organs, printed in 1891 more than eight hundred thousand numbers. Monthly sheets and magazines, *All the World*, *The Deliverer*, *The Socio' News*, *Full Salvation*, etc., amounted to two hundred thousand. Journals, tracts, books, and other publications, reached millions of numbers sold, with all the news in them to satisfy the inordinate hunger for reading that distinguishes the English people. War is declared in thirty-four different languages and in a written form in seventeen.



The international character of the sect is by no means exaggerated. Among 3154 battalions, 2623 are in Great Britain, British Colonies, and the United States, among which Great Britain figures as having 1395 battalions. For the non-English world there are about 531 battalions—few. The officers number 10,893 in all; 8981 in the English-speaking world, 4697 in Great Britain. The general staff numbers 1110. In these are included men and women—the army has no distinction of sex. Among the officers the women are two-fifths, and they are the most fervent and work better; so Bramwell Booth told me.

But of what does the work consist? In preaching abstinence, and rescuing women from prostitution and men from vice, and giving them countenance and employment. Mr. Bramwell Booth said to me, "Last year we rescued fifteen hundred lost women from the streets of London. The total of the reformed amounts to twelve thousand or more. The work consists in travelling missions that go through the villages in vans called Cavalry forts, and in processions through the streets, to preach the new law. There are no less than a hundred and sixty thousand results from these every year."

"But is the doctrine they preach different from, or hostile to, the other religions? In fine, is the Salvation Army a new sect?"

Mr. Bramwell Booth smiled and said, "We are

hostile to nobody. Every one who believes in Our Lord Jesus Christ is with us."

I, however, insisted that it was impossible not to say that the Salvation Army was a new sect.

They sell yearly more than twenty thousand bonnets that form a part of the female uniform of the army. And one of the causes of success is the extreme youth of the officers; most of them are under twenty-five years old.

At the end of seventeen years of preaching, the Booth clan celebrated the apotheosis of the Salvation Army at a meeting at the Alexandra Palace, where eight thousand soldiers (a great event) heard read a letter of congratulation from Queen Victoria. And afterwards the "social scheme" for the redemption of "darkest England" was patronised by the Prince of Wales, who headed a subscription that produced a hundred thousand pounds in one year. Is there any greater proof of how much this work, carried out to the extravagant end, corresponds to the British genius and fetish?

Splendidly installed in their palaces at the head-quarter staff in Queen Victoria Street near Blackfriars Bridge, with a bank of their own, co-operative stores, journals, and an infinity of benevolent institutions, the ambition of the Salvation Army is, as Mr. Bramwell Booth told me, to substitute for the official charity and the work-houses, maintained with the taxes got from the

poor, co-operative institutions inspired by self-help, and so to restore the sentiment of responsibility to the lowered conscience of the very poorest. Besides this, the Salvation Army provides a mystic nourishment for the unfortunate in speaking of religion to classes who have never entered the Protestant churches, which only *respectable* people frequent.

In this way there is a democratic revival of English mystic individualism; and with his usual felicity a certain critic noted the affinities that exist between the institution of the Salvation Army and the thought of Carlyle, expressed better than anywhere in his supreme book *Past and Present*. This revival of religious mysticism and philanthropic ardour (we keep avoiding the word "charity," which is not in the case) coincides with the expansion of the social democracy, with the first rolling of the ship of capitalism, and is for this reason a symptom of something remarkable.

There are many who accuse the Booth family of doing an excellent business in salvation, and sapiently exploring the industry of human redemption. The accusation is a mistake, although the literal fact may be true. General Booth had the ability to reckon on the pence of the poor in the same way that the O'Connell penny (every Irishman gave a penny, a mere trifle, to support the tribune) produced thousands of pounds. This is the only way to do things in England. St. Francis of Assisi, if he were to come here, would

He hissed merely on account of being a saint, while General Booth is received with acclamation just because he is grotesque. He knows how to get his living, the first thing necessary. He has accomplished the thing that presented itself to him ; so he is a winner. He is a winner at the game of redemption. The very idea of making an imitation army and a watchword of "salvation," is to show the combat through which the Englishman views everything. And this is not a mere figure of speech ; it is particularly and intentionally true. To set in motion the heavy constitution of the phlegmatic Englishman, it is necessary to tickle his palate with some kind of caustic pepper. This is what the intuition of General Booth divined. He set himself the task of exploring scandal, striking the attention, making a noise, calling down on himself the protests and objurgations of phlegmatic people, in order to find out how much the Englishman rejoices in the contest ; as *sport* is his dainty morsel, he will generally manage to come successfully out of it if he manages to get into it. He clearly confesses that the army would consider its services in the open air as a miserable failure if they did not cause obstructions and did not inconvenience inhabitants.

It is the wrong side of humour and the systematic making of the most of appearances, or *show*, as the English call it. On this account the squads on the march manage systematically to obstruct

the traffic and to force themselves upon the hearing and attention of passers-by. The windows are immediately peopled, and the inhabitants grunt, protest, and ridicule ; but yet the thing remains.

They preach short five minutes' sermons with few words but strong. The General recommends "everything short, sharp, striking, vigorous." Afterwards they sing hymns—

"Crossed the river of Jordan  
Happy, happy, happy, happy,  
Crossed the river of Jordan  
Happy in the Lord !"

It is puerile and barbarous, but it is just what suits semi-savages, the cast-off scum of a loose civilisation. General Booth is instinctively and intuitively a great psychologist.

They sing, falling on their knees, and beating their breasts—

"Christ is my salvation !  
I was indeed sunk low in sin  
When the Lord saved me."

These are short sentences full of meaning. The members are decorated with large red letters, "S S," on their collars ; and the men wear caps of red galloon, while the girls, the "hallelujah lasses," wear bonnets with red ribbons. They carry flags with the motto "blood and fire," and drums, cornets, and tambourines. They dance

•jigs. It looks like a carnival, but this is just why the Englishman is drawn towards it. And they take heart, in spite of his indignant protests, just in proportion as they annoy and irritate him. The Englishman stops, begins by applauding smilingly, and ends by falling on his knees, converted.

## XXXVIII

### SPIRITUALISM

TO my mind the most general and characteristic phenomenon in England at the present time is the democratic revival, with a socialist and mystic turn.

The Salvation Army provoked in me suggestive considerations; but another thing that impressed me even more was the frequency of spiritualistic superstition. In this the Englishman is like the Roman—he has a taste for theology; he sees gods everywhere. And the world at the same time appears to him peopled with ghosts that are called up by various means. One may almost say that there is not a family in which they do not consult the spirits by means of tables or hats, circular objects to which the contact of the hands imparts movements to be interpreted in various ways. It appeared to me that this frequency of the superstitious state ought to conduce to the abatement of religious beliefs in a people in whom metaphysical faculties are certainly not dominant. Naturalism and superstition are correlative, in the

absence of metaphysical piety. There is no reading more illustrative in this respect than Plutarch: he wrote at a time in many respects like our own.

No one who is well or even partially acquainted with old superstitions (the pamphlets of Maury, *La Magic et l'Astrologie* and *Le sommeil et les Rêves*, are instructive) is surprised at cases of modern superstition, which the forced explanation of charlatanism is not competent to meet. I do not now intend to enter upon a disquisition on superstition, or to expose contemporary spiritualism; I only mean to give some notion of the impressions received by contact with this people, who are radically superstitious because they hate to philosophise. The spiritualism practised, whether superstitiously or religiously, in the bosom of their families, is no stranger to their societies and places of worship, combining also in an abstract way the method of European sciences, the traditions of Eastern occultism, and the hallucinations of feminine nervousness. A "Society for Psychical Research," which has already published eight volumes of "Proceedings," and the president of which is Professor Henry Sidgwick, collects and comments on all cases of second-sight and apparitions; so that it may be called the academy of spiritualism. Also the Blavatsky Lodge, derived from the name of the founder of Eastern occultism in London, now succeeded by the extraordinary figure of Mrs. Besant, assembles on Thursdays at 19, Avenue



Road, Regent's Park. I have here the programme of the lectures for May and June.

May 19. The hidden forces of nature :—

- I. Modern Chemistry and Electricity in the light of the esoteric philosophy.
- „ 26. II. Modern investigations into physics and superphysics, referred to occultism.
- June 2. III. Nervous ether and its relations to mesmerism.
- „ 9. IV. Crystalline shapes and elementary forces.
- „ 16. V. Occult properties of precious stones.
- „ 23. VI. Sound as a constructor and disperser of shapes.
- „ 30. VII. Mediæval and modern witchcraft.

On Thursday evenings there are lectures and conferences ; on Saturdays there are theosophical exercises ; and on the first Tuesday in every month there is a conversazione. This is enough to show the character of the teaching professed at the "Lodge" in Avenue Road. The occult theosophy of Central Asia, now studied in numerous volumes, embraces the new physics of Professor Crooks, the inventor of radiant material and of the curious instrument called the radiometer.

I wished to give a description of the appearance of the English pythoness, Mrs. Besant, but I was unable to get an interview with her. Her biography

known and popular. She is one of the many missionaries that England produces, but with a truly higher talent and gift of attraction than the rest. Pricked with the thorns of life at its outset, she has passed through all the tropical deserts parched by the sun that nourishes Protestant, capitalist, and respectable England. Having a fellow-feeling with misery, socialism attracted her; seeing vice so close, she has devoted herself to the regeneration of woman. The great dock strike of 1889 overcame her, and unionism obtained an ascendancy over her; and along this road she travelled till she got towards nihilism, until Madame Blavatsky initiated her in the theosophy of occultism. This biography is a revelation in the study of the real commotions of the mystic imagination of the English.

• I here transcribe an interview with a "reporter," Mr. Stead, the celebrated author of the scandals revealed in the *Pall Mall Gazette*.

"I asked Mrs. Besant if we had not been the victims of an illusion?" (It was a case of apparitions.)

"Certainly not," said she kindly. "There is nothing impossible in this; but it is necessary to be careful in such experiments. It is as dangerous to go thus waltzing through planetary spheres as for a girl to go wandering about a dark slum with the people about. The *elements*, in their desire to live, eagerly approaching the passions of men, are

not the most agreeable companions. One cannot consider it most desirable to hold relations with the *astrals* of those dead people whose lives ended suddenly or violently, and whose passions were ardent. Be careful ; children ought not to play with dynamite."

"But what is an *astral* body ?"

"There are different astrals, each with its characteristic features. The lowest of the astrals has no consciousness, will, or intelligence. It exists as a mere dream or phantom, only while its corporeal and material element exists."

"And the mummies in the museum ?"

"Certainly, the mummies. . . . One who sees discovers their respective astrals in attendance on them, concealed near them. As the body dissolves, so the astral evaporates."

"But this implies the idea of agonising spirits."

"Certainly. An old friend of mine, a lady whose name is well known, was for months followed by an astral. She is a strong-minded woman, and was not put out about this ; but it hurt her when the astral began to die away. As the corpse was gradually decaying in the coffin, so the astral was evaporating, until it entirely disappeared."

Of the astrals, as of the individuals, the descriptions are infinite, from complete obtuseness to august liberty and intelligence. The astral, the spirit, phantom, or thought-body of the dead and of the living, are all various ways of expressing an idea

What presides over the soul-world of the universe. This idea was indeed the primal one in humanity. On this account, this fever of superstition allied to scientific method is the explanation of all recorded cases of hallucination or second-sight that are in stock ; at the same time that it institutes a wide inquiry into the most extravagant psychical phenomena. And indeed the number and descriptions of the cases related are extraordinary. I was in London when the *Daily Graphic* related an authentic case of a young lady whose dead husband appeared, and who got his photograph taken. The newspaper published reproductions of her photograph and his: she is living and breathing, while he is a phantom. It was a great hit ; and the *Daily Graphic* must have thrown off hundreds of thousands of copies, because it was seen everywhere in everybody's hands.

It is certain that there are millions of cases of extraordinary hallucinations, second-sight, and other phenomena, but it would be ridiculous of me to begin relating any here. There are hundreds of different kinds of recollections of this sort. There are a number of different effects produced on the mind, bringing to us facts of which we are ignorant, and objects that the memory does not represent to us. The phenomena of second-sight, hypnotism, suggestion, and double personality are now common, and no one, except through fear or stupidity, fails to see that a cloud of mystery

overhangs us. Suppose you told anybody a hundred years ago that you would be able to communicate instantaneously from one extremity of the world to the other! Suppose you told him that your own voice could be heard hundreds of leagues off! If even in my time the mere fact of getting a light without a wick seemed a miracle to country people, mysteries, or, to use another expression, unexplained or even inexplicable phenomena, appear everywhere.

As Goethe said to Erkmann, we are journeying within a cloud wrapped in mysteries. There is no doubt that in certain ascertained cases our own minds have been able to obtain a knowledge of future or distant events, touching the reality, though not properly conscious of the act. The words of Hamlet are true—

“There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamed of in your vain philosophy.”

Only Pharisaism, or the affectation of superiority, or even panic-terror, the old terror inspired by the god of wonders—only these can shut our eyes to the fact of questions asked in all ages, but which only at the present time, after we have studied the whole external world, we have been able to state accurately.

“Is there anything more extraordinary,” said Dr. F. to me, “than these late discoveries? The air we breathe, the breath we exhale, everything

that surrounds us, is alive with swarms and crowds of animated beings. We see that with the microscope."

"Certainly; but these little bodies are not essentially different. They are material organisms, but not spirits."

"And what is the meaning of the word spirit? I cannot conceive any substance unless it is materialised, whatever be its size and proportions. Are they beings of a material apart by itself, for which the notation of science has not yet found terms?"

"This is what Crooks tries to prove in his doctrine of irradiant material—a new material condition, or rather one newly examined."

"I am not prejudiced against admitting it. For myself, the highest aim of modern science is to teach us that of which we are almost entirely ignorant. It is infinite! The field of our vision and observation is like a drop of water to the ocean. For instance, the solar spectrum. We see a scale of colours, do we not? Then by means of chemistry *we know* that before and after, above and below, *there are* ever so many more colours."

"Dr. Magnus endeavours to show that the Greeks of the Homeric period could not distinguish between green and blue."

"I don't know that; but I do know that photography gives microscopically traces that sight does not perceive but that salts of silver reveal."

*They are seen*, but only after being photographed; that which has not made itself apparent to the natural sight has come out through photography. So that I no longer wonder that invisible spirits may be photographed. I mean those invisible to us. Rochas, the oculist of Paris, says that he has obtained in his laboratory, by means of photography, the old phenomena of witchcraft or the evil eye."

"Does science then seek to rehabilitate witchcraft?"

"Why be afraid of it? Are not all medical men every day proving the efficacy of empirical remedies? There is nothing so perspicacious as instinct. But, resuming witchcraft and photography, the operator states that he can charge the photographic negative with the *sensibility* of the individual whose likeness he is about to reproduce. The likeness obtained remains *sensitive*. If you prick it with a needle, anywhere the person whose likeness it is feels the pain and sees the wound in the same place. Do you think this is merely a state? It may not be one. Dr. Luys, of the hospital of La Charité, and Dr. Arse, of Brussels, repeated the experiment and obtained results. From the fingers of a person under the influence of hypnotism flowed a *visible* fluid that, crossing the water in a glass, was able to leave there a sediment of sensibility; and on the *sensitive* negative the same phenomenon of sympathy is shown.

Do not wonder then, I repeat, that invisible things may be photographed—they are invisible to your eyes, but they are no less in existence on that account."

"Invisible; yes; but unreal too?"

"What do you mean by 'unreal'? That thing is just as real that is outside of you, and that you perceive objectively, as any other thing that is inside you and that you subjectively throw off from yourself. I conceive, provisionally, that thought determines sensible material undulations, and that these undulations, when thrown off, take the form of the object thought of. Distant material action through conductors that we have not yet discovered appears to me incontestable. Telepathy is no jest. And if it is not, all the rest consists in modifications and inferences from it. How do you explain, otherwise than on this supposition, the fascination exercised by the toad over the weasel? It is a well-known fact, but still one as badly explained as others that strike the imagination of mortals by their curious effects. The stupefaction called hypnotism is the almost complete stoppage of the subjectivity of a brain, and on that account it shows an exceptional receptivity for emanations proceeding from the thought that dominates it. This is explained how it is that the patient sees that which is within the thought of the operator of which he before had not the slightest intimation."



"All this, then, leads to the conclusion that your ancient classic materialism was a representation, though extremely infantile, of reality."

"Perhaps so."

"That material has properties yet to be defined."

"So Crooks endeavours to prove, giving to physics a new property, that of irradiation."

"That reality indeed consists of dynamic force, and material, conceived of up to the present time only as a thing to be measured, has to be defined as a permanent action, and the universe as though it were peopled with spirits. Leibnitz is then victorious."

"I am no philosopher, but I believe that as the nineteenth century has stated problems of biology, so the twentieth will add entirely new chapters to physics. Our age, moreover, has defined psychologically the collective phenomena of mythology and symbolism, with a comprehensive insight which is the gift of the German mind. The twentieth century, believe it, will give a scientific definition of the old problems of wonder-working, and by this achievement will give the palm to England."

"I do not say whether it is so or not. But what I cannot admit, because in this instance I am obstinate, is that there exist astrals, as Mrs. Besant says; that there exist spirits without will, conscience, or intelligence, because it is just these things that constitute spirit. Spiritualism seems to me the aberration of individualism in this race

of athletes, who possess the qualities Plato attributed to athletes. When Puritan faith is extinct, naturalism casts them into theosophic superstition because they cannot escape out of realism. At the hour when this century closes, I see erected before the British giant two sphinxes smiling with humour—one will be socialism and the other spiritualism. Incontestably they are the two problems that characterise the modern revival of British mysticism and democracy. Good-bye."

When I left Dr. F. to go to rest, because I had to leave next morning for Dover, I took a view along the Thames. I saw grimly before me the Alexandrine monument of the Island of Pharos. It was Cleopatra's needle rising up on the Embankment in the darkness of the night. But the faces of the two sphinxes did not seem to me to smile with humour, but their eyes seemed to glisten with a feline expression.

THE END.

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